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The birds of Albany County

Wilbur Webster Judd



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**THE BIRDS
OF ALBANY COUNTY**

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and is Limited to Three
Hundred Copies. This Copy
is Number 288**

Wilbur Webster Jones



WB

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT

PLATE I

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11



THE BIRDS OF ALBANY COUNTY

**A CATALOGUE OF THE SPECIES
RECORDED IN THIS VICINITY, WITH
NOTES ON THEIR LIVES AND
HABITS, AND BRIEF FIELD-MARKS
FOR AID IN IDENTIFICATION**

BY

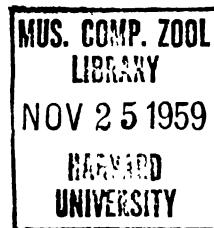
WILBUR WEBSTER JUDD

**Containing One Plate from a Water-color by William
S. Barkentin; Ten Plates from Pen and Ink
Drawings by George Louis Richard,
and Eleven Half-tones from
Photographs**

**ALBANY, NEW YORK
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SEVEN**

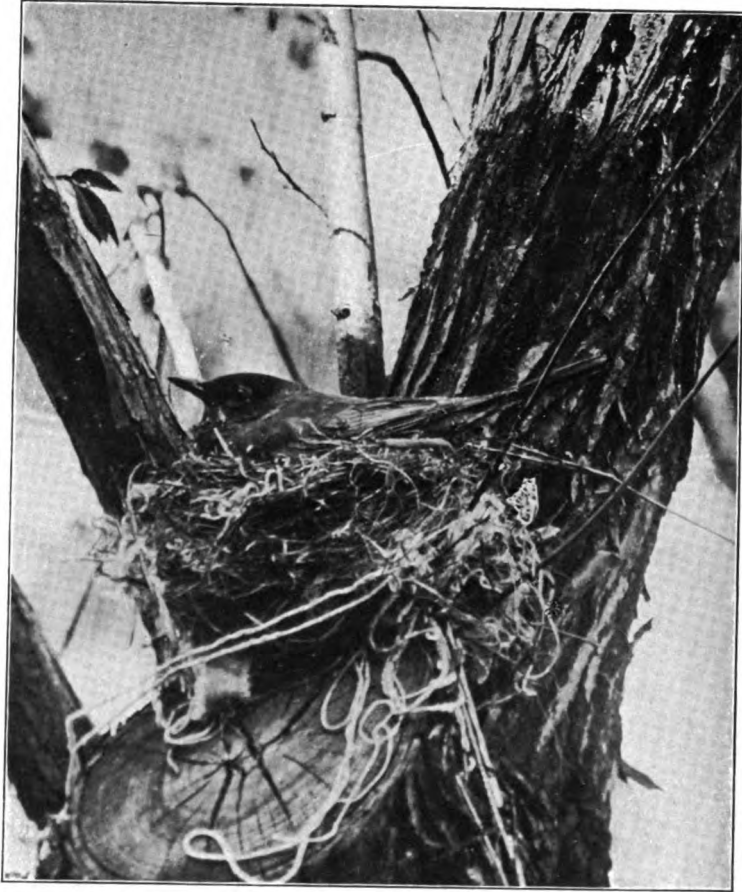
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ROBIN ON NEST

PLATE II

To My Cousin
Josephine Webster Allerton
This Book is Dedicated

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I WISH to express my sincere thanks to all those who in any way have assisted me in the preparation of this book, as follows: To George L. and William C. Richard, masters of woodcraft, my frequent companions in the field, for much valuable information; to Dr. John M. Clarke, State Geologist, for granting exceptional privileges in the State Museum, Albany; to John A. McCarthy, editor of the Albany Sunday Press in which much of the matter in the book first appeared, for advice and encouragement; to H. A. Slack, for valuable information; to George H. Chadwick, professor of geology at St. Lawrence University, formerly zoologist at the State Museum, Albany, for a unique suggestion; to two women bird observers who wish their names omitted, Henry H. Valentine, and others, for notes; and last, but not least, to the many subscribers who made this book possible.



WILSON'S THRUSH, NEST AND EGGS

PLATE III

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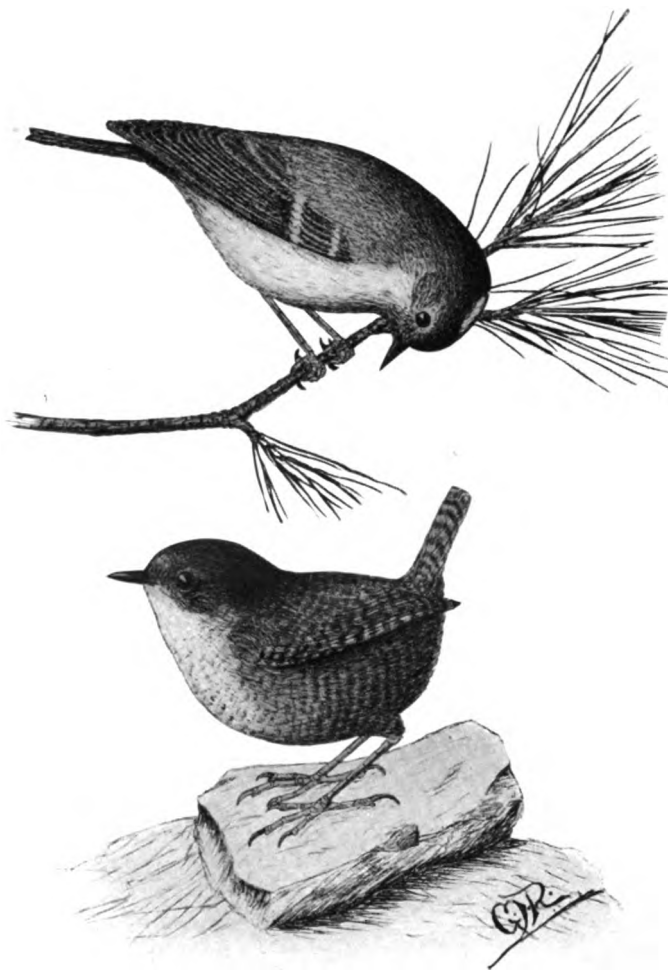
EXPLANATORY

MUCH of the material in this book was written originally as a newspaper serial and was therefore designed to appeal to the general public. In rounding it into shape for a book, supplying the necessary addenda and making much needed revision, the author has still made every effort to avoid as much as possible the use of technical terms, at the same time trying in popular language to be scientifically exact. Nevertheless it has been impossible to avoid certain expressions which are probably unfamiliar to those not acquainted with bird-lore. If the notes and sketches herein shall in any degree entertain the reader and lead him to desire a more intimate knowledge of the birds of this County, it is advised that the book be used in conjunction with an ornithological work in which the author has gone more deeply into technicalities.

The Field-marks are, in the main, but mere outlines of the birds as we see them in the open, the descriptions of the plumages applying solely to the male in the breeding season except where otherwise indicated; closer analyses of the birds of the East have been prepared and are readily available. Attention is particularly called to the scale of measurement in the plates made from Mr. Richard's drawings. This is found in the flourish line underneath the artist's initials, which

in every instance represents one inch in relation to the size of the bird. The numerals which follow the scientific name of the species represent the length of the bird from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail when stretched out on the taxidermist's table; but when it is considered that individuals of the same species often differ considerably in length, and that when the bird is in motion its spinal column is curved, thus rendering it shorter, these figures will not be taken too seriously as aids to field work. However, to the entirely unsophisticated, they may serve to show that a Hummingbird is smaller than a Great Blue Heron.

The drawings were made from mounted models, which in several instances were prepared especially for this purpose. The photographs were made in the field by an expert.



GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET
WINTER WREN

PLATE IV

INTRODUCTION



THE Valley of the Hudson is one of the greatest highways for bird migration on the continent. It is the natural roadway to the breeding grounds in the Adirondacks, northern New England, and Canada for the majority of the species that come up from the South along the Atlantic sea coast, or those that pass over the Alleghanian range in Virginia, Maryland or Pennsylvania and take to the eastern route. A number of birds remain in the lower Hudson Valley to build their nests and rear their young, but after all available records have been gone over, it appears that one hundred and ninety-five birds reach Albany County, to which may be added a hypothetical list of fourteen County visitants. Many of these pause here but a short time and then respond to the irresistible Call, but a considerable number remain with us through the better part of the Summer, and breed.

The homing of the birds begins early in the Spring. Then, when March or April winds are singing plaintive melodies through the bare branches of the elms and maples, and in the dark hill recesses and on whitened uplands we seem almost to hear the mystical sounds of green buds swelling and the upward gush of hidden springs, listening ears can catch the welcome notes of Bluebird, Robin, Song Sparrow, Red-winged

Blackbird, and others of the hardy troop that face the rigors of this early season. About the time the first cluster of pale blue *Hepatica* blossoms is found nestling among the brown leaves, a number of birds have appeared, and we ask ourselves the question, What impulse brings the birds home again?

We are face to face, now, with the great world-problem of bird migration. But there is no answer, that we know, under the azure dome of our April heaven. Various theories have been advanced by learned ornithologists of Europe and America, but it is generally acknowledged that none of them has found the right key, and the door to the mystery still remains unlocked. It is not the purpose of this work to enter upon this discussion, or even to summarize the theories already presented; but as all mysteries have their charm, and the riddle of bird migration is one of the most alluring of them all, it seems not out of place to call the reader's attention to the movement of the birds, which, twice a year, goes on about us.

In May come the Warblers (*Mniotiltidae*), the daintiest, brightest colored, and the least known family of birds. They move in "waves," or companies, often composed of several hundred individuals and a number of species. The gentle slopes of the Hudson Valley in this part of the State, where small woods and second growth abound, and especially the little ravines that are found here and there, north and south of Albany, are well adapted to the Warblers. I speak of the *Mniotiltidae* as being the least known family of birds; by this I mean that Farmer Babcock, or the Dweller in Cities, may never have seen or heard of them, but the careful bird student knows them and appreciates their beauty.

By the first of June all the birds have arrived, those that breed farther north have passed on and our own Summer birds are absorbed with nesting cares. In midsummer the birds are less active and sing little, but by the first of September the southward migration has begun. The Fall migration is not so conspicuous as that of Spring, as we already have birds with us, the arrivals from the North are more silent, and the local birds slip off quietly on the southern journey.

I might have begun this book by announcing to the unsophisticated reader that the avifauna of eastern North America is divided into seventeen Orders; that thirteen Orders are represented in Albany County; that several of these Orders are divided and subdivided into many Families; that the Order *Passeres* is the largest, and includes perching birds; that the Order *Raptores* includes the birds of prey, such as the eagles, hawks, owls, etc.; that in the Order *Macrochires* is found the apparently strange circumstance of the diminutive Hummingbird and somewhat grotesque Nighthawk and Whip-poor-will, classed together; that the Order *Pici* contains the woodpeckers, and so on; but what would be the use? If I did so you would probably picture me as an etiolated old gentleman with but a wisp of hair left on his cranium, with lean shanks in dilapidated pantaloons, and surrounded by a formidable array of dried specimens, and books of learned appearance.

The musician must first master technique before he can secure the finest artistic effects, but not so with the ornithologist, or the bird student. Once upon a time the museum specimen and the book came first, but not so with the present generation. We go immediately to the fields and are greeted at once by the

bird chorus in full voice; we loaf in sylvan byways, or linger where the lush grass grows most luxuriantly by the water's edge; perhaps we throw ourselves down in some June meadow where the daisies lie like sheets of snow, or mayhap we pull ourselves up some mountain side midst ferns and moss-covered rocks; but we certainly avoid the museum until we have caught at least a glimpse of the soul of ornithology. And it has a soul, well-defined, clear, and distinct, but not until we have felt it do we really know what it means to be abroad with the birds.

The average city-bred person is a savage in the bird world. And as the savage would probably not exactly understand or appreciate the complexities of a great chorus from one of Mendelssohn's or Handel's oratorios, so he who goes forth from the city for the first time to listen to and know the birds is apt to be overwhelmed by their numbers and the variety of their notes. The flash of orange and black through the blossoms of the fruit orchard is dazzling; the zig-zag, ringing tones in a nearby woodland thicket are startling and incomprehensible; so the bubbling song of the tiny bunch of feathers that darts through the rushes along the river front. It needs a tutor to point out that the minstrel in orange and black is the Baltimore Oriole, a very common bird in Washington Park and all the environs of Albany; that the bird with the up-and-down song is the Golden-crowned Thrush, or Ovenbird, and that the last, the bird along the river, is the Long-billed Marsh Wren, both the latter being also abundant residents of Albany County.

In this book I have made the attempt, modestly, of course, to act as a tutor in the field. Our glass is our only weapon,

and as we stroll through meadow or wood, or even in Washington Park, we endeavor to establish the identity of the birds by means of the "Field-marks" given herein. These short analyses of the birds' principal characters are, in the main, but quick, impressionistic outlines of the feathered folk, my only object being to present the most salient features in plumage, call-notes or movements, as the bird is seen with the naked eye or glass in its natural haunts. In several instances I have gone beyond this, led by personal interest in some particular bird; I have also used a various manner in treating of a number of species; several of the biographies are essay-like, others smack of the conventional "bird-book," and still others bear the earmarks of the mere catalogue; suffice it to say, all this has been intentional and therefore I have no apologies to make.

Very little space has been given to bird-songs as I believe that this subject has already been overdone. It is also practically impossible to reproduce in cold type any of the wild beauty, the thrilling loveliness of the most perfect bird-songs. The music reviewer always finds himself severely handicapped as he tries to tell his readers in mere words something about the glories of the symphony he has heard. Therefore I have little to say about the music made by the birds. If you wish to hear it, go out in the fields and listen; and if my little book will have aided anyone to know the minstrels better, either by the coats they wear, or their habits of life, perhaps I shall not have written in vain.

THE BIRDS OF ALBANY COUNTY

ORDER PASSERES

SUBORDER OSCINES

Family Turdidæ

BLUEBIRD.—*Sialia sialis*. 7.04

Very Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Upper parts bright blue; throat, breast and sides reddish-brown. Female, duller.

So many pretty things have been said by poets and naturalists about this little harbinger of Spring that it is next to impossible to characterize him anew. Nevertheless, the writers have not agreed as to the date of his arrival in our cold Northland. His principal distinction is his being so widely and generally known to all classes of persons. About every newspaper in the country announces his arrival from the

South, and even though the dates rarely agree, it is evident that he has a place in the affections of all, although he may be only a symbol of the approaching resurrection of life. I have seen Bluebirds on the ice in February and they did not seem to mind their frosty surroundings. Hoffman says that "In southern Connecticut and Rhode Island, especially along the Sound, and in the lower Hudson Valley, small flocks of Bluebirds spend the Winter, feeding largely on berries." I have no doubt of this statement, as it was in central Connecticut that I saw Bluebirds in February. No writer, to my knowledge, has ever recorded their presence as far north as Albany County in midwinter, and I believe that the middle or the latter part of March is about the time their faint, lisping warble is first heard in this section. I am not going to repeat any of the complimentary things already written about Bluebird, but I will try and typify him myself.

Far more than a symbol of the coming recrudescence of nature, he is the type of perfect innocence. His attitude on limb or fence-post betokens confidence in all men. His movements are always gentle and devoid of any show of haste or alarm. He allows you to approach quite close to him and look upon his azure back and russet breast. If he finally flits away to some nearby perch his flight is calm and unflurried and his pose unostentatious. As I have said elsewhere he never betrays emotion and his serenity we may not always understand, but surely he is the optimist of the feathered world. One writer says that Bluebird's song breathes of love. Very true; but it is certainly an ethereal type, with no suggestion of the dross of the world.

Bluebird is something more than a symbol. He and his more modest-hued wife have duties to perform in the springtime quite as well as other birds not so well known to the human family. The home is generally in a hollow limb or birdhouse, but Bluebird never excavates for himself. Like the Great Crested Flycatcher and House Wren, he hunts about until he has found a convenient hollow, which has either been fashioned by the beak of a Woodpecker or through the process of natural decay, and therein builds the nest of soft grass. From four to six pale blue eggs are laid and sometimes the first set is complete by April 15. Two or three broods are reared in a season. Bluebirds have few enemies to contend with, and they are as numerous now as when our grandfathers were boys. They are not so often seen in cities as formerly, as they have been driven out by the English Sparrows. But stroll out in the country a mile or so in the early Spring and you will be greeted by them on every side.

AMERICAN ROBIN.—*Merula migratoria*. 10.00

Very Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Head black, white spot over eye; back dark gray; throat white, spotted with black; rest of under parts light reddish-brown; bill yellow.

While the writer who said that Robins were, "mostly fools," may have been rather too sweeping, still, close observers cannot deny that this bird displays a surprising lack of wit on most occasions. The strongest evidence against him in this regard is his way of always acting half scared to death.

The majority of persons know Robin, by sight at least, and it is safe to say that not one in a thousand would do him harm. He has benefited more than any other bird by the advance of man's civilization and he increases rather than diminishes in numbers. Parks and lawns, where hawks never come, are his favorite abiding places now, where once he was forced to dwell in primeval wilds at the mercy of many natural enemies. Man has acted consciously and unconsciously, as his protector. To be sure we still have cats with us and it cannot be overlooked that Puss is extremely fond of tender Robin, but this is no reason why he should go through the world acting as though every human had a gun under his coat tails. Such behavior is uncomplimentary to say the least.

Watch Robin as he hops rapidly over the close-cropped grass about your home. His head is in the air and he has a wild look in his eyes. Even if he stops to pull a worm out of the earth he keeps well on the lookout for fancied enemies. Approach him ever so gently and he flies away as though the evil one were after him, uttering the while his rapid *rip, rip, rip, rip, rip*.

Then he uses very little discretion about his nest. If old Moses Babcock, the farmer, while mowing his orchard happens to swing his scythe under the fruit tree where Robin has his habitation, he is promptly abused in vociferous tones by both Mr. and Mrs. Robin, though any fool knows, that Farmer Babcock would not harm them or their four blue eggs for a hundred acres of his neighbor's best land. And if Moses Babcock, Jr., should be caught by his sire in the act of squirming up to the said nest, he would straightway feel the

weight of a horny hand. Of course young Mose sometimes does loot Robin's domicile, but that is because Robin has given away his hiding place by indiscreet and unnecessary screaming. Birds probably never swear, but oftentimes it seems as though Robin comes painfully near it. There is rarely any reason for this resentment, but if a human should sometimes swear at Robin it might be pardonable.

Despite the foregoing, slightly disparaging remarks, it cannot be ignored that Robin has some admirable characteristics. His utility in the economic scheme of things has long been recognized by the agriculturist. He eats a few cherries—why should he not?—but the noxious worms and grubs that fall victims to his excellent appetite, more than compensate for any alleged wrong-doing in cherry time. He is also a trim, well-groomed, and altogether handsome bird, and therefore an ornament to our parks and lawns. Imagine Washington Park without the Robins! they are everywhere and animate every glade and nook.

Robin certainly can sing. His favorite time is generally in the early morning or the late afternoon, and April is the time of the year when he is at his best. I stood at sunset one afternoon near the Capitol and listened to the singing of a Robin which was balanced on the bare branch of a Maple and silhouetted against the fading sky. He was a master among his kind, and in his liquid notes I seemed to catch the words:

O, beautiful! Beautiful!
Mortals hear!
Glory! O, glory!
Springtime's here.

While migratory as his scientific name implies, individuals frequently are found in Winter in warm valleys as far north as Albany County.

Throughout the Summer, Robin builds his nest in any decent sort of place. I have seen them in sand banks, on beams in old sheds, and in trees of all kinds. Baird, Brewer, and Ridgeway in their classic work, "The Land Birds," state that Robin lays five eggs. I have examined hundreds of nests in many parts of the East and never saw but four in one nest, though it may be that occasionally five are laid.

Robin bears no relation to the English Robin Redbreast for he is classed with the true Thrushes. The adult shows little trace of this, but the young-of-the-year have spotted breasts, which is one of the characteristics of Thrushes the world over.

HERMIT THRUSH.—*Hylocichla guttata pallasii*. 7.20

Common Spring and Fall Migrant; Quite a Number Remain
Through the Summer and Breed

Field marks.—Tail reddish-brown, of a distinctly brighter shade than the olive-brown back; ashy, or tawny, throat, streaked and spotted with black.

This elegant bird, attractive in voice and personality, occasionally spends the Summer in Washington Park. In vocal powers he is regarded by many writers as the Nightingale of America, and while the migrating individuals seen about Albany are silent, those that remain to breed sing freely. Mr. Horace G. Young informs me that one sang gloriously near

the Albany Country Club late into June, 1907. As its name implies, the Hermit is extremely retiring, preferring well grown woods for an abiding place; still, one will occasionally approach the farmhouse, or even enter the city. A fine male spent the first two weeks of April, 1907, in the rear yard of the house where I have my lodgings on High Street. This yard is directly in the rear of the old home of the Albany Institute and Historical and Art Society. The bird did not mind the presence of the laundress hanging out clothes, but calmly surveyed the scene from the branches of a small peach tree. Hermit spent most of the time on the ground in the fence corners grubbing for worms. He was absolutely silent. One morning while observing the bird from my room with a glass I discovered near him two White-crowned Sparrows feeding on the ground.

The Hermit's nest is placed on the ground; four greenish-blue eggs are laid.

WILSON'S THRUSH; VEERY.—*Hylocichla fuscescens*. 7.50

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Tawny tinge, often overspreading its entire brown and white plumage; generally stronger on the full throat.

The Veery is the commonest of the Thrush family in this County throughout the Summer, frequenting moist woods, or low swamps where the undergrowth is thick. It can be easily distinguished from the other Thrushes by the yellowish-brown

plumage and low, purring call-note. The song, once heard, is never forgotten. I have found this Thrush the commonest in the wooded land south of the Schenectady Turnpike, near Wolf Road.

The nest is placed on or near the ground and contains four or five greenish-blue eggs.

WOOD THRUSH.—*Hylocichla mustelina*. 8.28

Summer Resident; not Common

Field marks.—Head and upper parts reddish-brown; breast full, ashy to white, with large round black spots.

When Emerson said that the morning woods are filled with angels, he had probably just heard the matutinal song of the Wood Thrush. Had he listened to the same bird gushing forth its evening hymn in some cool, dark wood he doubtless would have gone further and proclaimed the arrival on earth of some beatified spirit with lyre and voice divine. The concept is easy of comprehension. While the vocal performance of several other birds may be more brilliant, surely no feathered creature on the American continent can so deeply stir the soul as the Wood Thrush. It has several songs, all extremely fine, but the one that I allude to, which has always seemed to me to be the bird's evening hymn, is something more than mere melody. It has a *flooding* quality. The soft voice of the flute is joined pianissimo by the wood wind choir and then, the quivering strings perfecting the harmony, the wildwood is suddenly swept with delicious music.

There is a pause, the shadows grow deeper and the song is repeated. Darker and darker grows the wood, the green leaves turn to black solid masses, the great trees are but faintly outlined against the sky; the Voice becomes silent and the bird of plain plumage and gentle mien tucks its head under its wing and falls asleep, guarded by the Creator with as much care, I venture to say, as man with all his works.

Everything about Wood Thrush is attractive. His graceful shape, noble breast, and retiring manner invite the love and admiration of the beholder.

The nest is a homely but comfortable structure of dry leaves and grass stuck together with mud, and is placed in the fork of a tree, on a limb, or in a cluster of shrubbery, from five to ten feet from the ground, generally in close woods. The eggs are sky-blue, unspotted, and closely resemble those of the Robin. Wood Thrush is the rarest of the three members of his family which breed in Albany County.

OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH; SWAINSON'S THRUSH.—
Hylocichla ustulata swainsonii. 7.16

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH.—*Hylocichla aliciae*. 7.58

BICKNELL'S THRUSH.—*Hylocichla aliciae bicknelli*.
6.25-7.25

So far as I have been able to learn, these three Thrushes are never seen in Albany County save as Spring or Fall migrants, though it seems quite probable that the Olive-backed may

occasionally breed in the higher parts of the Helderbergs. There are records of its nesting in the higher Catskills, but its summer home is in the Adirondacks and northern New England. Gray-cheek is seen here only as a rare migrant. The Bicknell bird is a smaller species, with habits and range similar to the Gray-cheek. The diagnostic features of the three birds are so slight that even the trained ornithologist with a powerful glass often finds himself puzzled to differentiate between them. If one wishes really to know these Thrushes I would advise a close study of Chapman's analyses and a comparison of the skins, which may be seen in any good museum.

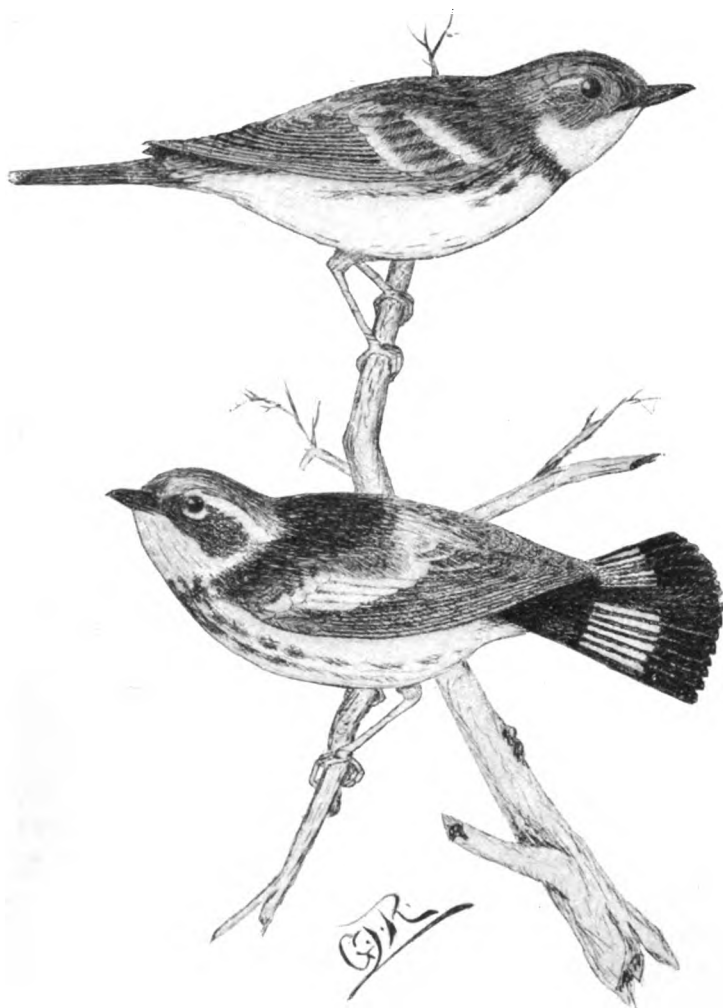
Family Sylviidæ

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.—*Regulus calendula*. 4.42

Common in Early Spring and Late Fall

Field marks.—This, and following species, smallest birds seen here, except Hummingbird and Winter Wren; upper parts grayish-olive; whitish wing-bars; under parts dull white; on close view the partially concealed, flaming-red crest may be revealed; feeds at the ends of twigs, preferring the hemlock.

This diminutive habitant of bird-land is much more common in this County than the average observer realizes. I have seen a large number in Washington Park in the early Spring. Under excitement the feathers of the head are erected and the brilliant red spot is visible. It breeds from the northern border of the State northward.



CERULEAN WARBLER
MAGNOLIA WARBLER

PLATE V

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET.—*Regulus satrapa*. 4.05

Common Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Even smaller than the preceding species; crown striped with orange and yellow; white line over eye; upper parts olive-gray; under parts dull white.

The habits and breeding range of this species are practically identical with those of the Ruby-crowned, save that the latter bird goes farther south for the Winter.

Family Paridæ

Subfamily Parinæ

CHICKADEE.—*Parus atricapillus*. 5.26

Common Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Utters its name constantly, often repeating the last syllable several times; head capped with black; rest of plumage black, gray, and white, with sides buffy.

I have often thought that I would like to write a poem on Chickadee, but have never been able to fashion a metre or evolve a style that would do him full justice. He is such a diminutive creature, a mere tiny ball of feathers, and is so generally distributed that even the ornithologists have not devoted much space to his life history, though not one has ever written anything about him of a disparaging nature.

How could they? He is as inoffensive as a breeze-blown ball of thistledown and it would be a clouded mind indeed that failed to appreciate his unfailing good nature, always in evidence in all seasons and in all weather. While he is not partial to cities, he shows no concern when man invades his precincts. His attitude is rather one of complete indifference. The direct opposite of the Robin, he never betrays alarm at the presence of the animal wearing trousers and flits his way among the forest trees as though the said animal did not exist, even though several large specimens may be smashing through the underbrush. Chickadee is possessed of a curiosity, however, almost as pronounced as that of the Blue Jay and if you conduct yourself aright when in his vicinity he will be quite apt to cease his foraging and investigate you.

I have been looked over several times by Chickadees. I generally approach as close as possible to them and then stand or sit motionless. This sudden turn of affairs attracts their attention and they approach gradually. It has been claimed that they will alight on one's shoulder or head, but none has ever honored me to that extent. I have had them come within three or four feet of me and then, evidently finding me too commonplace to warrant further attention, they have uttered a mellow *chick-a-dec-de-de-de—dede*, and gone their way.

Piney woods are favorite haunts of the Chickadees. They generally travel in bands in cold weather, and devote all their time to the search for food among the branches, about half the time hanging head downward. During the love-season the male has a simple, but exquisite little song, several notes of which sound like the softer tones of a flute heard at a distance.

But the bird's common call is certainly a very pleasing sound in the Winter. While walking through the solemn aisles of some dark wood when the ground was carpeted with snow, the brooks frozen into silence, and the wind chanting unearthly melodies through the trees, I have often found the common notes of the Chickadees sweeter by far to my ears than even the glorious warbling of the Veery in the full flush of the vernal season.

Chickadee's cheery presence is found in Albany County the entire year. He never migrates and though in severe Winters he may find himself, sometimes, hard pressed for food, he never shows any discontent. After the leaves come out in the Spring he is not so often seen for he has abandoned for the time his merry companions, chosen a mate and gone to housekeeping. His home is set up in the hollow of a deciduous tree which he often excavates himself. As his beak is not very powerful he generally chooses a very much decayed limb in which to bore, oftentimes a crumbling white birch. The nest within the cavity is a perfect marvel. The material mostly used is rabbit's hair, which is gathered along bunny's trails, though other hair, soft vegetable fiber, and moss are used sparingly. All this is woven into a felt-like cup which serves as a soft resting place for the six or eight young. After family cares are over and the fledglings have been launched on the world, Chickadees become gregarious again and by October have resumed their winter habits.

HUDSONIAN CHICKADEE.—*Parus hudsonicus*. 5.32

Rare Winter Visitant

Field marks.—General appearance similar to *atricapillus*, but slightly longer; blacks replaced by brownish-gray; plumage looks ragged.

A few individuals of this species have been observed occasionally near West Albany in midwinter in company with common Chickadees or American Goldfinches. Its breeding range is farther north. While the habits of *hudsonicus* are similar to those of our own cheerful little Chickadee, its notes are said to be quite unlike.

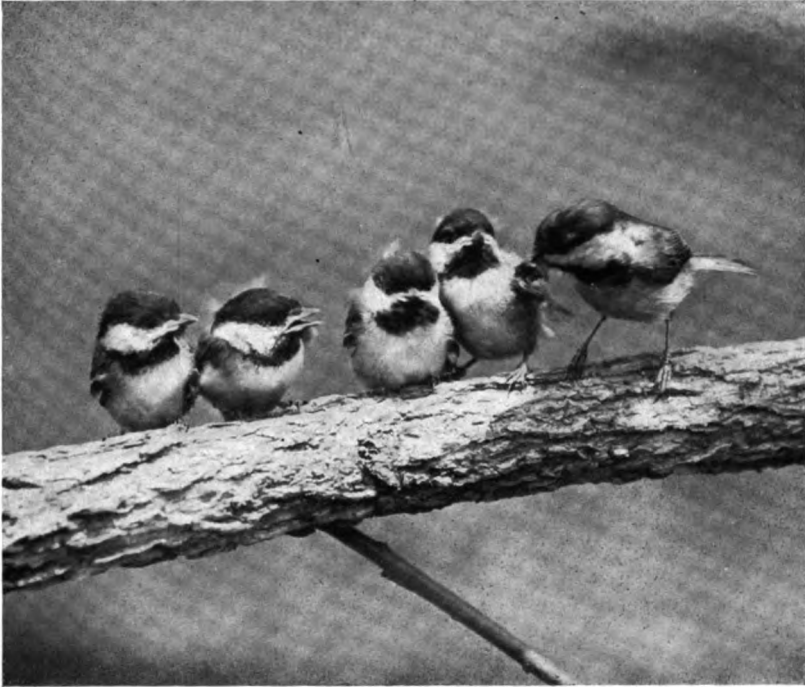
Subfamily Sittinæ

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH.—*Sitta carolinensis*. 6.08

Common in Spring and Fall; Rare in Summer and Midwinter

Field marks.—Nasal note, described below, repeated constantly as it creeps up and down tree trunks; plumage grayish-blue, black and white.

About the only note of this hardy bird—an oft repeated *krank, krank, krank*—is often the only sound one hears, when abroad in the woods in gray November or breezy March. Occasionally, as the love-season approaches, he becomes so gay as to attempt a slight song, which is mainly the repetition of one syllable on about the same key. He is not exactly a



CHICKADEE FEEDING HER YOUNG

PLATE VI

crank, but is certainly quite eccentric in that he is so different from the birds of other families. Having heard his call you will shortly discover him jerkily clambering up and down the trunks and limbs of trees, searching for bugs and grubs.

His plumage is always smooth and unruffled no matter how hard the wind may blow. How he manages to keep himself so well groomed and still devote every minute of the day to grub-hunting, I never learned.

This Nuthatch is a permanent resident of Albany County, though in the coldest part of Winter very few are seen, the majority retiring further down the Hudson Valley, where there is better protection from the storms and bitter winds. The nest is built in a hole in a tree; eggs, five to eight, creamy white, speckled with brown and lavender.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH.—*Sitta canadensis*. 4.61

Not Uncommon Spring and Fall Migrant

Field marks.—Very similar to above species, but much smaller; under parts reddish-brown.

I have found these birds more common hereabouts in the Fall than in the Spring. It has a nasal call, but less pronounced than its near relative the White-breasted Nuthatch.

Family Certhiidae

BROWN CREEPER.—*Certhia familiaris americana*. 5.65

Rare Fall, Winter, and Early Spring Visitant

Field marks.—Brownish bird; creeps along the bark of trees; looks like a mouse in feathers; slender, curved bill.

It is hard to observe this bird because of its neutral colors and shy disposition; but only a glimpse is necessary to establish its identity, for there is no other bird here at all like it.

Family Troglodytidae

Subfamily Troglodytinae

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN.—*Telmatodytes palustris*.
5.21

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Conspicuous white line over eye; under parts white; upper parts streaked and barred with dark brown; never seen anywhere save in reedy marshes.

Wherever cattails abound, along the Hudson River, in marshes or about inland creeks or ponds of this County, the effervescing, delightful, and incessant song of this little creature is heard throughout the breeding season. One cannot fail to find them, for, on approaching a colony, they seem to exist by the hundreds, as all sing at once, both on the wing and

while swinging on the tall reeds. The song is as indescribable as the Bobolink's and once heard will never be taken for any other. These birds are quite common near Watervliet. The nests are globular in form, constructed of grass and flags, and placed in a cluster of cattails. The entrance is through a small hole in the side. From five to nine chocolate-hued eggs are laid. The male, to amuse himself and to work off superfluous energy, builds several mock nests near the family domicile, but so far as known they are never occupied.

The Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus stellaria*. 4.00) may be present in Albany County, but I admit never having seen it, and know no one who has.

WINTER WREN.—*Olbiorchilus hiemalis*. 4.05

Spring and Fall Migrant and Rare Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Tawny line over eye; entire plumage finely barred with varying shades of brown; turns tail over back; fond of frequenting brush piles.

The observer of the birds who has caught a glimpse of this wonderfully active little sprite in its favorite haunts—the depths of cool, dark woods along some tiny, tinkling rivulet—may well esteem himself fortunate. To be sure it is rather difficult to distinguish this bird from the House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*, but, once familiar with its various characteristics, the problem is much simplified. *Aedon* is apt to be the more neighborly, invading villages and towns and

rearing its young in convenient bird-boxes, while *hiemalis* is primarily a bird of the wilds, and asks little odds of man and his contrivances. The Winter Wren has much the shorter tail, which is invariably turned over the back and pointed towards the head in a very comical and wren-like manner. Besides, he has a habit of nodding at you, or courtesying, which should serve to identify him at once.

But the resident of Albany County will not be apt to encounter the difficulty of distinguishing between these two closely allied species, except in early Spring and late Fall. You may look for the Winter Wren in woods along streams, by dark roadsides, and particularly in brush heaps, in and out of which he darts with such rapidity that one's eye must be very sharp to detect him. In an obscure corner of one of these brush heaps, in a cluster of black rootlets, or within a little mossy cavern close to a singing, sylvan stream his nest is placed. In Albany County this very mouse of a bird is only a traveller, on his way from the piney woods of Virginia, to more northern latitudes. I have never seen his nest outside the museum but Chapman says: "Breeds from the Northern States northward, and southward along the Alleghanies to North Carolina." Rarely he is found in Winter as far north as Massachusetts and the lower Hudson Valley.

A male specimen¹ of this beautiful little creature, now in the State Museum in Albany, I had the good fortune to discover in a wooded spot near the Normanskill, Kenwood, on

¹The lower figure of Plate IV is a portrait of this specimen. Since writing the above, Mr. H. A. Slack, of Pine Hills, tells me that it is his opinion that the Winter Wren breeds in Albany

County, occasionally. At least he has seen them late in Spring in brush heaps. Personally I have not been able to determine this point, but it appears not improbable.

April 30, 1906. The female was not present; indeed, my Winter Wren was the only bird in that particular spot.

I should not close without saying something about the striking song of the Winter Wren. It is a long series of trills and chatterings of a wholly indescribable character, pitched high and of a clear, liquid quality. During the early Spring and late Autumn he rarely sings; but throughout the love season the solitudes where he loves to dwell are often broken by his inspiring, and even startling, roundelay.

HOUSE WREN.—*Troglodytes aedon*. 5.00

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Frequents old orchards, barns and birdhouses; moves very rapidly and constantly gives forth a bubbling song, entirely lacking in melody; general color brown, with sides and tail faintly barred with black.

Those who have lived in rural places or those who resided in cities before the advent of the English Sparrow, will recall with unalloyed pleasure this small neighbor with his endless vivacity and gurgling song. Perhaps he had his habitation in the hollow of a dead limb of the plum tree close to your chamber window, or mayhap he gushed forth every other minute a musical appreciation of your thoughtfulness in having provided a neat bird-box at the end of the grapevine arbor, or on a post in the garden; it matters not—if you had ears to hear and eyes to see, you are sure to remember him with exceptional affection. There is a buoyancy, a light-hearted abandon about the House Wren's intermittent warbling that

dulls the edge of pessimism and gives a new color to existence. It is in May and the early part of June that our diminutive friend is most active, both musically and in domestic affairs. He and his little wife are about the most indefatigable workers I know.

They arrive in Albany County from the South about the last week of April and, after about two weeks preliminary skirmishing, settle upon a nesting site and begin their labors. The nest is generally placed in a hollow limb or a bird-box, though an old tin can lodged in the crotch of a tree, a space in the walls of a house, or the end of an abandoned stove pipe often serves the purpose very well. It makes little difference to these hustling mites of birdland whether the cavity selected is large or small; in fact, it often appears that they purposely choose an expansive hollow so that they can work off their superfluous energy by carrying in building material. Every square inch of space is literally crammed with twigs, many of which are as heavy as the birds themselves. No housewife with a penchant for spring cleaning ever went at her task with greater vim than do the House Wrens when once they set out to build their home. They work vigorously from dawn until dark with an energy that is a standing rebuke to all those who are inclined to be idle. The female is more retiring in her manner, but the male is always on deck, singing, working—and fighting with every feathered intruder, for the House Wrens are noted for their pugnacity. In such encounters the Bluebird, the Downy Woodpecker, or even the English Sparrow, is no match for the Wrens, who invariably come out triumphant, though often many fierce battles occur before

the victors can pursue, uninterrupted, the even tenor of their ways. But the English Sparrows are so numerous wherever brick walls and pavements abound that I fancy the Wrens have tired of combatting them, and that this is the real reason why they have retired nowadays to more strictly rural places to rear their young.

The House Wren is fairly common in some parts of Albany County. From six to eight eggs are laid and often there are two broods in a season.

Subfamily Miminæ

BROWN THRASHER.—*Toxostoma rufum*. 11.44

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Long slender bird; bill long and curved; tail proportionately long; upper parts bright reddish-brown; grayish under parts, heavily streaked with dark brown; eye bright orange-yellow; has jerky flight.

This glorious singer, the "Brown Thrush" of the small boy and persons untrained in bird-lore, is a summer resident of Albany County, though nowhere common. On walks in May or June I have met with one or two pairs, but never more, and sometimes have not encountered them for weeks. The nest, a flat but artistic structure of sticks and dried rootlets, is placed in a low bush, or more generally on the ground. Four eggs, with bluish-white ground, thickly speckled with cinnamon, are the nest complement. Ordinarily Brown Thrasher frequents dry, overgrown pastures or low second

growth, keeping close to the ground. But at times the male will mount to the topmost branch of a tall tree and sing for an hour or two without stopping. The song is conceded to be the most brilliant of our eastern birds.

CATBIRD.—*Galeoscoptes carolinensis*. 8.94

Common Only in Certain Parts of the County

Field marks.—Entire body slate color, varying to nearly black on the head and tail; under tail-coverts chestnut.

Although of beautiful conformation and one of the sweetest singers in the world, the fine qualities of this bird of the thickets are not very generally known to other than bird students. Further, with ignorant persons, he is often spoken of in contemptuous terms. This is probably because of his name and his peculiar common note, which vaguely suggests *Felis* in distress. But it is only the superficial observer who has not discovered his fine traits. The disagreeable note is uttered only when his haunts are invaded, or his beloved nest approached by some lumbering human. Study him sympathetically and you will discover that he has few rivals as a vocalist and is one of the most harmless of our feathered folk. He delights in moist, warm mornings late in May or early in June, when, with tail depressed and feathers all in a pretty fluff, he will mount on a limb and sing in a way to charm the hearer. Catbird is a common summer resident of Albany County. The nest is built of sticks and dark, fine rootlets in thick-growing shrubbery, from three to ten feet from the ground. Four dark green eggs are laid.



HOUSE WREN WITH SPIDER

PLATE VII

MOCKINGBIRD.—*Mimus polyglottos*. 10.50

Very Rare Straggler

Field marks.—Long, slender, symmetrical bird; upper parts soft grayish, becoming dark olivaceous on wings and tail; basal half of primaries and outer tail-feathers white; under parts ashy to white.

In the early Spring of 1900 an Albany woman saw a long, slender, grayish bird feeding on the scarlet berries of a small tree in Washington Park. She at first thought it to be a Cuckoo, but on closer observation with the glass, it seemed to be nothing less than a Mockingbird. Not trusting to her own judgment, the lady immediately informed two local bird authorities, and together the three visited the Park on the following day. They were amazed to find the same bird in the same tree, now thoroughly at home and feeding at leisure on the luscious berries, which had stuck to the twigs over Winter. Mockingbird allowed the observers to come very close to the tree, where they had an excellent opportunity to look him over and note all his characteristics. There was no doubt about the identification. The bird was seen every day for a week, and then he disappeared. But while with us, Mockingbird qualified as a pugilist, if not as a singer; he fought well, but scorned to sing. Robins, Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings, and even English Sparrows, were forced to keep their distance and Mocker was the ruler of that berry tree. He came, he was seen, and he conquered; and when the berries were all gone, he went, too. This Mockingbird was a straggler, and it will probably be many years before another is seen in this County.

There is nothing specially remarkable about the presence of a Mockingbird in this vicinity, as they have bred sparingly in recent years in one locality in Massachusetts, and are regular, though rare visitants to southern Connecticut and New Jersey.

Family Mniotiltidæ

AMERICAN REDSTART.—*Setophaga ruticilla*. 5.40

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire upper parts, throat and breast black; sides reddish-orange; wings and tail barred with salmon; belly white.

This brilliant little black and orange Warbler is generally one of the first of its family to be identified by the beginner in ornithological lore. Aside from its striking coloration, its habit of spreading its tail like a tiny fan and its flycatcher manners render identification easy. Its high-pitched, wiry and rather unmusical song is one of the familiar sounds in our woods during the last of May. Clearings where second growth abound are its favorite haunts, though it is often seen along roadsides. The female is an olive and yellow edition of the male.

The nest is very similar to the Yellow Warbler's, but is generally placed higher, in trees. I once found a beautiful nest in the fork of a white birch; it was composed of white vegetable fiber and lined with white cow's hair, giving a remarkable example of protective coloration in nest building.

WILSON'S WARBLER.—*Wilsonia pusilla*. 5.00

Common Migrant

Field marks.—Crown lustrous black; forehead yellow; rest of upper parts bright olive-green; under parts bright yellow.

The Black-cap, as it has been called, is generally found among the gay troops of migrating Warblers in the middle of May, but it moves along rapidly and a brief glimpse is all one can get. It breeds farther to the North.

CANADIAN WARBLER.—*Wilsonia canadensis*. 5.60

Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Under parts bright yellow; breast barred with black spots; upper parts gray.

From all accounts this bird should occasionally breed here, but a brief view of it in May is all I have ever obtained.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT.—*Icteria virens*. 7.44

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Upper parts olive-green with infusion of gray; entire throat and breast brilliant yellow; white line over eye; belly, ashy to white.

While very recent writers have been inclined to give the Yellow-breasted Chat a somewhat lower range than this, I

have gathered exact data which give him a residence in Albany County. My friend, Mr. William C. Richard, of Yellowstone Park, formerly employed here as a taxidermist by the State of New York, took several specimens and found it breeding near Kenwood. The frontispiece in this book is from a mounted specimen taken by Mr. Richard near Waterford, in Saratoga County. He also took the female and the nest for State uses. Another excellent ornithologist also informs me that she observed this species near her summer home on Lake George. This undoubtedly carries the bird much farther north than other writers have placed him.

While I have observed the Chat in other sections of the country, I have not had the good fortune to run across it during my five years' residence in Albany County. Our friend with the lovely yellow breast is the very wizard among the birds. I do not know of any one who pretends to understand him. He shrieks, whistles, calls, purrs and whines, and performs strange gyrations in the air. On a limpid June morning, when the air is sweet with the perfume of the white azalea and the tangle in which his nest is built is heavy with dew, he is fond of disturbing the peaceful scene by a very bedlam of unearthly sounds; then again he is as silent as a ghost and the sharpest eyes cannot detect him or his mate. I have found a great number of their nests, but I never flushed the bird from one; the domicile was always absolutely deserted, though the eggs were warm, showing that the parent had just slipped off silently into the surrounding shrubbery. I have no doubt but that I was being watched by two pairs of black eyes, but the birds remained invisible to me. I have, however,



LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE
PLATE VIII

often observed the bird in a thicket, or on a nearby limb. Although handsomely proportioned, the bird has a way of throwing its body into grotesque positions which I have never seen any other bird assume. Stealing softly into their haunts, I have seen them throw themselves up in the air, twisting and turning, up and down, uttering the while their uncanny cries like little feathered imps. Then, at the snap of a twig, they would disappear and silence would reign supreme so far as they were concerned.

The nest is a neatly woven grassy basket placed in a low bush. Four or five eggs, whitish ground, thickly speckled with brown, are the nest complement.

NORTHERN YELLOW-THROAT.—*Geothlypis trichas*
brachidactyla. 5.31

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Broad black band across forehead and extending well down the sides of the head; upper parts olive; throat and breast bright yellow. Female without the black band; rest of plumage same as male, but duller.

In damp places where ferns, long grass, and low growing shrubs are luxuriant, especially along the borders of woodland, this extremely active little Warbler is common in this County throughout the breeding season. It has a way of darting rapidly through the low growth, pausing for an instant on branch or reed, uttering the while its sharp metallic *check*, and disappearing in the leafy maze. Once identified it can never be mistaken for any other bird.

The nest is an artistic, cup-like structure, very deep, compactly woven, and placed in a thick-growing tussock of grass, or at the base of several small shrubs, well canopied with leaves or ferns. I have found several nests within five miles of Albany.

MOURNING WARBLER.—*Geothlypis philadelphia*. 5.60

Rare Migrant Late in May

Field marks.—Head, neck and throat bluish-gray, forming a sort of veil; breast blackish; back olive-green; belly yellow.

This is about the last migrant to pass through this County in Spring. Several examples were seen in the Sand Plains in 1907.

OVEN-BIRD.—*Seiurus aurocapillus*. 6.17

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Walks; constantly teeters; upper parts plain olive-brown; sides of white throat and breast streaked with dark brown; crown pale rufus; has an up-and-down song, which sounds like a repetition of the word shirtee, *shirtee*, SHIRTEE, SHIRTEE, beginning softly and ending in a wild shriek.

Though called a Golden-crowned Thrush our subject is really not a Thrush at all, but a member of the Warbler family. He gets his most familiar name, Oven-bird, from the way he has of building his nest, which is placed on the ground and domed like an old-fashioned oven. Oven-bird, though very common in Albany County, is probably unfamiliar to any one

except the bird student. He is more often heard than seen, and when one has learned to recognize his ringing, up-and-down notes he will be recognized in about every thicket or wood one penetrates. He also has a very beautiful song, but few people have heard it.

Oven-bird figured in one of my earliest and most startling ornithological experiences. I was a small boy then, and, attracted and even alarmed by the frantic cries and up-standing feathers of two of the birds, which greeted me as I passed through a quiet wood, I began a search for the nest. I supposed that it was my presence that had disturbed the parent birds, therefore when I discovered the domed structure I plunged my hand into the side entrance with boy-like curiosity, with the object of discovering what treasures the nest contained. I found out all too soon. My fingers came in contact with the cold, slimy folds of a snake.

I jumped probably about a rod. The frenzy of the birds was redoubled. They followed me, screaming and crying. There was a pathetic note of appeal in their voices. Yes, I understood, now. They were begging, imploring me to save their offspring. My fancy, you say? Not at all. Those birds begged me as clearly as human beings could have done to come to their relief. Having quickly got over my fright I approached and with a stout stick pried the horrid reptile out of the nest. He had one baby bird in his jaws and a lump in his middle which told the tale of the fate of another. One blow of my stick paralyzed His Snakeship and caused him to drop the bird from his mouth. It was not badly injured and was able to run back into the nest, where I found three other fledglings resting comfortably and unaware of the

danger in which they had been. I then pounded the snake to death and threw it far away.

What a peace suddenly fell over that bird household! The parents ceased their cries and with little purring notes of gratitude returned to the nest, although I stood near at hand. I don't believe birds can count and, as the nestling that had gone down the throat of the snake was not missed, the parents, finding order apparently restored, resumed their ordinary duties as though nothing tragic had occurred.

I visited that home several times afterward and had the satisfaction of seeing the remaining young birds grow up in safety. I always imagined I was *persona grata* on their threshold, for no matter how near I approached, the parents showed no concern. And sometimes the male would mount a low branch and give me a ringing song of welcome. The female always remained as demure as all female birds, but her glance and manner often seemed to say, "You're all right brother; our whole family will always love you."

The following year I rescued another family of Oven-birds from exactly the same species of enemy, the Milk Snake. It was in a different wood, but the circumstances and the sentiment were the same. It is not strange, therefore, that no matter how far I travel from those early scenes, I always feel that I receive a royal welcome from the Oven-birds when I pay a visit to their sylvan haunts.

It will be observed that in my representation of Oven-bird's common call, or song, I seem to have paraphrased the description, commonly regarded as classic, given many years ago by Mr. John Burroughs. He puts the song as the repetition of the word *teacher*, but as my ear has caught

it, the song begins invariably on the last syllable of Mr. Burrough's word and ends on the first; therefore I believe that the word *shirtee* is more nearly exact.¹

LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH.—*Seiurus motacilla*. 6.27

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Walks, and constantly teeters; white line over eye; under parts faintly washed with buffy; breast and sides streaked with very dark brown; throat unspotted; otherwise similar to Oven-bird.

This is a bird of the mountain torrent, through the spray of which it darts so rapidly that never but a glimpse of it can be obtained. I once found three of the nests, all of which were in wild places and close to small streams. In spite of all my efforts I could never get close enough to observe the parent birds; but one day I managed to creep close to a nest set deep in a bank and catch the female with my hand. After examining her closely I gave her her liberty. The eggs are five in number, creamy-white, speckled and blotched with reddish-brown and lilac. The Louisiana Water-Thrush breeds rarely in Albany County. The novice will probably

¹After writing the above, I chanced to read over the article on the Oven-bird in Frank M. Chapman's new work "The Warblers of North America," finding the following observation by Miss I. M. Paddock of St. Johnsbury, Vt: "The words usually given for this song, teacher teacher, seem to me to be begun with the second syllable thus: *cher-tea cher-tea cher-tea*." I have decided to let my rendering stand as I think my position has been

strengthened, though Miss Paddock's spelling of the first syllable is undoubtedly the better. Mr. Chapman writes: "Formerly, singing Oven-birds said, to my ear, with remarkable distinctness and decision, *teacher, teacher*, etc., in the usual crescendo chant, but as I now hear the song the accent is placed on the last syllable." Does Mr. Chapman mean that the bird has changed its song, or that he now hears more correctly?

wander through the woods several years before he discovers a nest. It has a charming song, but it is rarely heard.

WATER-THRUSH.—*Seiurus noveboracensis.* 6.03

Common Migrant, though Rarely Seen

Field marks.—Line over eye buffy; throat spotted; otherwise almost identical with *motacilla*.

This third member of the group is very rarely seen in this County, as a migrant. Its habits are the same as the preceding species, though its breeding range is farther north.

YELLOW PALM WARBLER; YELLOW REDPOLL.—

Dendroica palmarum hypochrysea. 5.40

Not Uncommon Migrant

Field marks.—Crown chestnut; upper parts brownish-olive, becoming brighter olive on rump; streaks of light chestnut on sides of throat and breast; under parts bright yellow.

This Warbler keeps close to the ground and frequents low growth. It will be known by its manner of tilting its body somewhat like the Spotted Sandpiper.

PINE WARBLER.—*Dendroica vigorsii.* 5.52

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Upper parts brownish-olive; under parts lighter; throat and breast washed with yellow.

In somewhat open woods where pines and hemlocks abound this species is very common hereabouts, its faint lisping note

being a familiar sound. It builds its nest high in pine trees; eggs four or five, whitish ground, spotted with cinnamon and umber, forming a wreath around the larger end.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER.—*Dendroica virens*.

5.10

Common Migrant

Field marks.—Throat and upper breast shining black; under parts white, forming a V at junction of black on breast; cheeks, forehead, and line over eye yellow; upper parts olive-green.

Fond of open woods. Does much of its insect hunting at the ends of twigs. In strong light appears brilliant yellow, green, and black, and unlike any other Warbler.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER.—*Dendroica blackburnie*.

5.24

Fairly Common Migrant

Field marks.—Throat, breast, and line over eye brilliant orange; upper parts black, streaked with gray.

Two Blackburnians which I saw in pine woods near Wolf Road on May 24, 1907, lead me to believe that the species may occasionally breed in this County. But this was an unusually cold Spring and all the birds were late in migrating. These two examples may have continued onward to the breeding grounds of the species farther north.

BLACK-POLL WARBLER.—*Dendroica striata*. 5.57

Uncommon Migrant

Field marks.—Crown black; auriculars white; two white wing-bars; rest of plumage white, gray, and black, streaked.

Although the Black-poll is supposed to be a common migrant through the Hudson Valley I have seen but very few.

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER.—*Dendroica castanea*. 5.64

Uncommon Migrant

Field marks.—Crown, throat, breast, and sides chestnut; back streaked with black; two white wing-bars.

Migrates late in May. Some years none is seen.

**CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER.—*Dendroica pensylvanica*.
5.14**

Very Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Bright chestnut stripe on sides; crown yellow; back greenish, streaked with black; under parts pure white.

In the northward migrating season this bird is the most numerous of its family. In the wooded slopes along the Normanskill, at Kenwood, about the middle of May, I have observed hundreds of the Chestnut-sides flitting from branch to branch, along with other more rare travelers. But in early

June I have found them very numerous and have run across several of their nests in low-growing shrubbery.

CERULEAN WARBLER.—*Dendroica cærulea*. 4.50

Extremely Rare Spring Migrant

Field marks.—Upper parts bright blue; back and sides of head streaked with black; under parts white; dark blue band across breast; two white wing-bars.

This beautiful little bird, whose plumage reflects the blue of a summer sky shot across with fleecy clouds, is probably the very rarest of the Warbler family in this part of the country. Evidently several noted ornithologists never saw it until very recently, while some in late works have omitted it from their lists of birds of the East. The real habitat of *Cærulea* is the broad Mississippi Valley during the breeding season and the tropics in Winter. It is, however, one of the few birds that is evidently extending its range eastward, having been observed occasionally in recent years at several points east of the Alleghanian range. Sometimes it straggles into Connecticut and Rhode Island.

In the early Spring, it not infrequently happens that individuals of species peculiar to the Mississippi Valley take the East Alleghanian route, proceed northward along the Atlantic coast and finally reach New England. The bird has long been included in the avifauna of New York State, Lockport being regarded as the limit of its eastward range. As far as my knowledge goes but one specimen has ever been

observed in Albany County. I happened to be one of a party of four ornithologists that discovered this single individual which was sauntering onward in the midst of a "wave" of migrating Warblers. Our Cærulea was shot and is now in the State Museum at Albany. It was taken at Kenwood, May 14, 1906.¹ Cærulea's song, if such it might be called, is similar to that of the Parula Warbler and consists of a little trill, or a succession of rapidly uttered syllables, in which there is no trace of melody, though it is not an unpleasing sound when all the woods are beginning to turn to yellow-green. The bird student in this County will have no opportunity of studying the nidification of the Cerulean Warbler.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER.—*Dendroica maculosa*. 5.13

Common Migrant

Field marks.—Under parts bright yellow; heavy black streaks on sides, converging at center of breast and forming a broken band; white patch on wing; upper parts ashy to black; rump yellow.

I feel a distinct pleasure in recording that these birds are present in large numbers all through the Spring and Fall migrations. They are leisurely in their manner, seeming to take their long journey to and from the breeding grounds by easy stages, and often in May remain about Albany several

¹ My note-book tells me that on this date we observed thirty-seven species of birds, among which were the following Warblers: Parula, Yellow, Red-start, Myrtle, Chestnut-sided, Black-

burnian, Black-throated Blue, Black and White, Cerulean, Golden-crowned, and Wilson's. The most numerous was the Chestnut-sided.

days at a time. Magnolia is an exquisite type of Warbler. Its under parts resemble the Canadian, but it can always be told from that bird by the white patch on the wings. One of the prettiest sights I ever saw a-field was a fine male Magnolia feeding among the white, feathery blossoms of a wild cherry tree.

MYRTLE WARBLER; YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER.—
Dendroica coronata. 5.65

Common Migrant

Field marks.—Rump, crown-patch, and sides of breast yellow; white wing-bars; upper parts gray, streaked with black.

This is about the earliest Warbler to arrive in Spring, the first appearing about Albany the last of April. It apparently remains about fifteen days and then disappears until Fall.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER.—*Dendroica*
cærulescens. 5.28

Field marks.—Throat, breast, and sides of head black; upper parts bluish-gray; distinct white patch on wing; belly white.

During the Spring migration of 1907 I found this bird almost as common as the Magnolia. In September and early October it is also present quite numerously.

YELLOW WARBLER; SUMMER YELLOWBIRD.—*Dendroica aestiva*. 5.11

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire plumage bright yellow; breast finely streaked with reddish-brown.

In close-growing willows along watercourses, this pretty little bird, whose plumage reflects the golden tones of the newest leaves, is very common throughout the breeding season. At other times from early May until September, he is found in orchards and woods. The nest, which is a dainty cup-shaped structure, composed of soft, gray vegetable fibers, is generally found in the fork of a shrub, but sometimes it is placed in a tree from ten to thirty feet from the ground. The Yellowbird has a pleasing song.

CAPE MAY WARBLER.—*Dendroica tigrina*. 5.00

Very Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Auriculars chestnut; yellow patch on sides of neck; rump yellow; white patch on wing; under parts yellow, streaked with black; crown black; back olive green, streaked with black.

Some years a very few examples of this Warbler have been observed migrating through Albany County. Other years they seem to be entirely absent.

NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER.—*Compsothlypis americana*
usnea. 4.72

Common Migrant

Field marks.—Upper parts bright bluish-gray; greenish-yellow patch in center of back; throat and breast yellow, with dark orange-brown band across breast; wing-bars white; belly white.

This, one of the smallest and most graceful of its family, occurs only as a migrant in this County. When in transit it often is seen flitting among the branches of trees in cities. In its breeding haunts it frequents moist, dark woods where *usnea* moss hangs luxuriantly from the trees. Its nest is built in a cluster of this moss.

TENNESSEE WARBLER.—*Helminthophila peregrina*. 5.00

Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Back olive-green; top of head gray; under parts white; no wing-bars.

Has been observed here rarely. In migrating it frequents open fields or sparse woodland.

NASHVILLE WARBLER.—*Helminthophila rubricapilla*.

4.78

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Reddish-brown crown patch, partially concealed by overlaying grayish feathers; rest of upper parts olive-green; entire under parts brilliant yellow.

During the Spring migration the Nashville keeps to the tops of tall trees, where often "waves" of hundreds are seen. On May 6, 1907, I encountered one of these Nashville troops at Kenwood. The bird is rarely seen in Summer in any part of the country where I have observed birds. It undoubtedly breeds in this County, though I have not found its nest. One nest that I found in central Connecticut was typical, being placed on the ground in second growth; the birds had carpeted the entrance with green moss. The four tiny eggs were white ground, faintly speckled with pale brown.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER.—*Helminthophila chrysoptera*.

5.10

Extremely Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Lores, auriculars, and throat black; white line above eye and on sides of throat; crown yellow; upper parts bluish-gray; patch on wing yellow; under parts yellow.

This birds breeds north and south of this County, but here has only been observed in the migrating season, and then very rarely.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER.—*Mniotilta varia*. 5.31

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Black and white, streaked, creeping bird.

This little chap used to be called the Black and White Creeper, which fits him perfectly. He can be mistaken for no other bird, because of his markings and habit of creeping about the bark of trees searching for food. Many are seen about here in the Spring and Fall, but in Summer they retire to densely wooded places where the nest is placed on the ground, at the base of a tree or stump.

Family VireonidæWHITE-EYED VIREO.—*Vireo noveboracensis*. 5.30

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Iris white; yellowish lores and eye-ring; upper parts olive-green with grayish tinge; two buffy wing-bars; throat dull white; breast and sides slightly yellowish.

Farther down the Hudson Valley this bird is a common summer resident, but in Albany County the finding of its nest is counted as a rarity. It is more noisy than others of its family, defending its domicile with several vigorous alarm notes. To identify it one must approach close enough to observe the white iris, which is very pronounced. All the Vireos' nests are similar. They are pensile, pretty cups woven of strips of soft bark from slender vines, lined with soft,

light-colored grass, and often ornamented on the outside with bits of spiders' webs, lichens, feathers, and scraps of newspaper. The edges are fastened to a horizontal fork which is at varying distances from the ground. Eggs white, spotted with brown at the larger end.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO; SOLITARY VIREO.—*Vireo solitarius*. 5.62

Not Uncommon Migrant

Field marks.—Lores and eye-ring white; upper parts varying from bluish-gray to yellowish-olive; white wing-bars; under parts whitish, with sides faint yellowish.

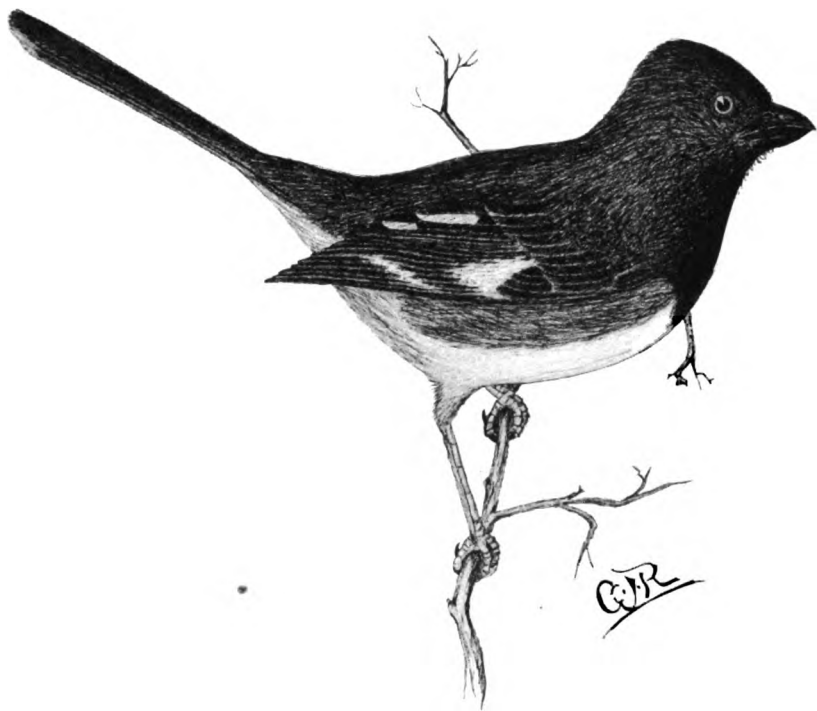
While passing from the South to its breeding grounds in the northern part of the State and Canada, and during the Fall migration, this species is frequently seen in this County. It has a loud, clear song, after the manner of the Vireos, but this is rarely heard hereabouts.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO.—*Vireo flavifrons*. 5.95

Not Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Throat and breast brilliant yellow; eye-ring yellow; two white wing-bars; upper parts distinct olive-green; grayish on rump; belly white.

This is the gayest hued member of the Vireo family seen in this section and can be easily identified from the above



TOWHEE

PLATE IX

outline description. It has been observed frequently in late May and early June in Washington Park and along the city streets where maple trees abound. It warbles a few phrases, without beginning or end, and by its insouciant manner seems to find the world a good place to live in, especially in places where man has grown fine shade trees and cleared out the undergrowth.

The rattle of the ice-wagon on the city pavements has no more terrors for Yellow-throat than for the Warbling Vireo, and late in the year, after the leaves have fallen, its nest will sometimes be revealed in the horizontal fork of some tall tree, standing out against the wintry sky as a rebuke to the most observing ornithologist.

WARBLING VIREO.—*Vireo gilvus*. 5.81

Not Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Upper parts grayish olive-green: lacks wing-bars; under parts dull white; belly faintly washed with yellow.

The cheery, though somewhat monotonous warbling of this bird is a familiar sound in almost all wooded places in this section throughout the Summer. It is frequently heard in city parks and about country homesteads. The singer keeps well in the tops of trees and while heard constantly, is very rarely seen. I have frequently stretched my neck and strained my eyes in an effort to catch a glimpse of the musician, but without result, although the bird was within twenty feet of me.

The nest is the same as all the Vireos, though it is generally higher, being placed in trees from fifteen to forty feet from the ground.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO.—*Vireo philadelphicus*. 4.75

Very Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Whitish line over eye; upper parts light grayish-olive, showing green cast in right light; cheeks gray; under parts very light yellow.

I have seen but one example of this species outside the museum, and this I procured early in the Spring. Nuttall, writing in 1832, did not know of its existence; it was first described in 1851. It is said to breed from the northernmost parts of the State northward, but very little is yet known of its life history.

RED-EYED VIREO.—*Vireo olivaceus*. 6.22

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Wide, pure white line over eye; iris red; upper parts light greenish-olive; under parts pure white.

I know of no bird so demure and love-inviting as this. When all the Spring world has turned to golden-green we greet them in sylvan vales and glades, gliding noiselessly among the new leaves searching for insects and a nesting site. They show no fear, and often come quite close to the

observer. A slight turn of the head and a casual glance is all the notice they take of the invader. I have observed that they always arrive from the South in pairs, a fact which I have never seen recorded by other ornithologists. This species is the plainest hued of all the Vireos. The song is similar to that of the Warbling Vireo and repeated constantly. Sometimes the nest is placed close to the ground and again it may be in a tree, twenty-five feet from the ground.

Red-eye is frequently seen in Washington Park and along the tree-lined avenues in the western parts of Albany.

Family Laniidæ

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE.—*Lanius ludovicianus*. 9.00

Rare Spring and Fall Migrant

NORTHERN SHRIKE.—*Lanius borealis*. 10.30

Occasional Winter Visitant

Field marks.—In first species, broad black band on side of head covering lores and auriculars; upper parts gray; wings and tail black with white markings; under parts white; bill hooked; *ludovicianus* is similar, except the band on side of head is narrower, and the under parts more or less delicately barred with grayish.

Both of these birds, so very similar in habits and appearance, are sometimes seen in Albany County, the Loggerhead in Spring and Fall, and the Northern in Winter. The arrival of a Shrike in any locality always causes a flurry of excitement among the smaller birds, for they know only too

well that he is a murderer, and is around for no good. The Shrike doubtless views the situation otherwise, for he likes to eat tender little birds. This explains the hooked bill, which is used to tear the flesh, after the manner of a hawk. If Shrike happens to seize a bird when his stomach is full, he impales his prey on a thorn and returns to it later. Some observers have gone so far as to say that the Shrike, or Butcher Bird, often catches birds and impales them just as a pastime.

The ordinary calls of the Shrikes are harsh and unmusical, but both birds are said to have vocal powers not unlike those of the Catbird.

Family Ampelidæ

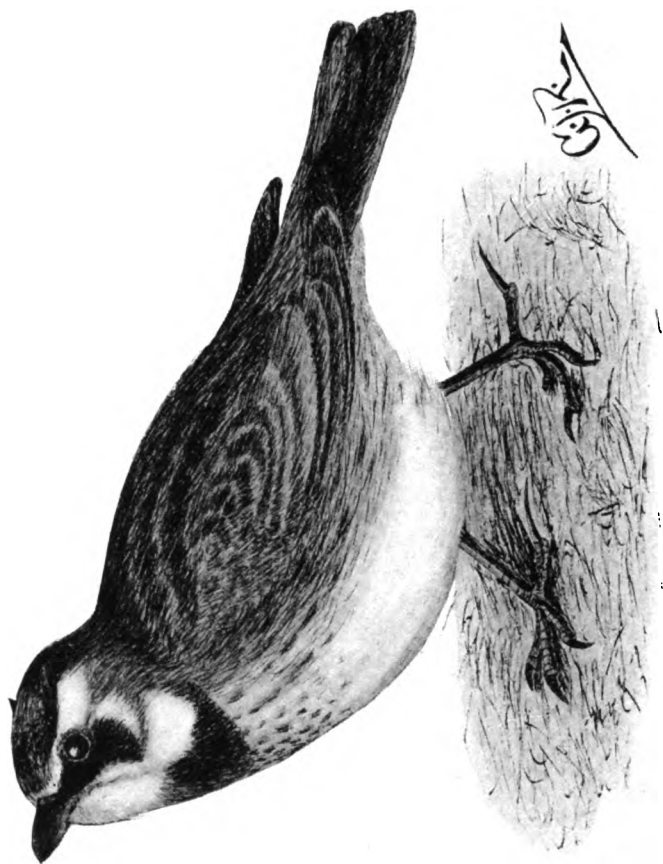
CEDAR WAXWING; CEDAR-BIRD.—*Ampelis cedrorum*.

7.19

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Stands very erect; long crest, nearly always raised; entire bird in the field appears light grayish-brown; on close view, small, red, bead-like ornaments are found appended to the secondaries; tail tipped with yellow; belly washed with yellowish.

While early to arrive in Spring and very late to depart in the Autumn, the Cedar-bird finds the Winters hereabouts too cold to his liking, though in the southern part of the State, large flocks are often found in the dead of Winter. A faint and rather plaintive lisping note, which can be heard



HORNED LARK

PLATE X

only at a short distance, is about the only sound they ever utter. When the cherries are ripe the Cedar-birds often display considerable animation as they pluck the juicy fruit from the stem, but in the intermediate seasons they have a peculiar way of wheeling about in flocks, suddenly alighting on the bare branches of a tree and sitting motionless. The perfect order in which they always keep their plain but rich plumage and their erect attitude gives them a handsome and distinguished appearance. The nest is not built until toward the last of June or along the first week of July. It is generally in an orchard on a fruit-tree limb.

Eggs, four or five, much elongated, spotted with dark brown or black on light bluish-slate ground.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING.—*Ampelis garrulus*. 8.00

Rare and Irregular Visitant

Field marks.—Almost entire plumage rich grayish-brown, slightly darker on back and wing coverts, and so fine and smooth as to give a waxen appearance; wings bluish-black, regularly flecked with white and yellow; ends of secondaries tipped with scarlet, seed-like appendages; feathers of crown reddish-chestnut and comparatively long, forming a conspicuous crest; forehead, line over eye, and auriculars black; chin lustrous black; under tail-coverts bright chestnut; tail feathers tipped with yellow, forming a band.

The above description is from a skin in my possession, which was taken by a friend in Wyoming, December 9, 1900. Two years later the same friend took two in Saratoga

County, this State, and on the same day observed a large number across the river in Albany County. This is probably the only known record of the Chatterer being here and it may be several years before any more are seen. *Garrulus* has been a puzzle to the ornithologists for a century, and its breeding habits are even now but little known. It is a great flier and is said to wander all over North America, Europe and Asia. It apparently has no definite range, but is more common in the Northwest and along the Rocky Mountains. Why it should have been called a Chatterer I cannot imagine as all authorities agree that its only note is a faint, lisping sound, similar to that of its near relative, the Cedar Waxwing.

Family Hirundinidæ

ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW.—*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*.
5.74

Not Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Throat and breast brownish-gray; upper parts darker; belly white.

This bird I have observed on numerous occasions in Albany County. The student will find it difficult to identify while it is on the wing, but if the skin of an adult specimen is examined closely it will be found that the outer primaries are edged with short, spiny feathers, which to the naked eye resemble the teeth of a fine saw, bent back until they look like minute hooks. If one can get a good look with a glass

at the Rough-wing in the field, the dull tone of the breast is the best key to identification.

This bird's flight is rapid and graceful, but it is apt to keep lower than its near relative, the Bank Swallow. The Rough-wing builds its nest in holes in banks, in crevices in rocks, or on beams under bridges. From four to eight pure white eggs are laid.

A very pathetic incident I witnessed recently in connection with my study of these birds. One had been shot for the State Museum, and, but slightly wounded, had fallen into the water, on the surface of which it floundered about pitifully. The mate, seeing its companion's plight, suddenly ceased its winged search for insects and hovered frantically over the injured bird with such an evident desire to rescue it that all our party were sorely distressed at the sight. Another shot sacrificed the sorrowing bird on the altar of science. Though the museum tags give no account of this brief, tragic episode, it served to show once more to the observers that our feathered friends have feelings closely akin to those of the human race.

BANK SWALLOW.—*Riparia riparia*. 5.20

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Band of brownish-gray across breast; rest of under parts white; upper parts blackish-brown.

This Swallow is present in considerable numbers, though there appears to be no extensive breeding grounds here. The

nest, made of grasses and feathers, is at the end of a small tunnel dug by the birds in a sand bank; eggs, five or six, white.

TREE SWALLOW; WHITE-BELLIED SWALLOW.—

Iridoprocne bicolor. 5.91

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Upper tail-coverts light brown; entire under parts pure white; upper parts steel blue, appearing black in flight.

Has been observed quite numerous out in the open country. There are records of its breeding in adjoining counties and it undoubtedly does here. The nest is built in a hollow tree or bird-box; eggs, four or five, white ground, finely speckled with brown.

BARN SWALLOW.—*Hirundo erythrogastra.* 6.95

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Forehead, throat, and upper breast bright chestnut; upper parts deep violet; under parts washed with light chestnut; tail shaped like a partly-opened pair of scissors.

From the first of May until the last of September, the Barn Swallows are very numerous in this County. They are, perhaps, the most graceful fliers we have. Sweeping low over the broad, open meadows, describing long curves, or rising and falling on the breeze like slender boats on a rolling

sea, their wing-evolutions are often a source of wonder, even to the casual observer. While they secure their food on the wing, they seem at times to skim through the air for the sheer delight of flying. In some old barn, where the shadows mingle with the subdued light, their constant twittering is a familiar sound. Here they build their nests, which are of mud and straw, lined with feathers, and plastered against the side of a beam. The young on leaving the nest are able to fly almost as well as the parents. Barn Swallows can be distinguished from all others of the tribe by the long, forked tail.

Eggs, four to six, elongated, finely speckled with light shades of brown.

CLIFF SWALLOW; EAVE SWALLOW.—*Petrochelidon lunifrons*. 6.00

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Cream-white bar across forehead; bright chestnut throat, extending in narrow collar about neck; black line down center of throat; rest of under parts buffy; crown and back, black, showing lustrous violet in strong light; wings and tail dusky; bright reddish-brown patch on rump.

When these birds sit in the entrances of their gourd-shaped nests, the crown shows conspicuously like a little crescent moon; the square tail in flight distinguishes it from the Barn Swallow. The Eave Swallow breeds here and there in this County under the eaves of old barns and sheds, but it is more common

during migration. The nest is made of mud, lined with grasses and feathers; eggs, four or five, spotted with light brown.

PURPLE MARTIN.—*Progne subis*. 8.00

Very Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Largest of the swallows; entire plumage lustrous steel-blue; wings and tail brownish.

A pair of these birds was seen in Watervliet about a bridge over the river two years ago, evidently looking for a nesting site. They probably breed here sparingly in rural places, though I have met no one who can vouch for this fact. The Martins were once numerous, coming into cities to breed, but have been almost exterminated by the English Sparrows usurping their nesting boxes. The eggs number four or five and are pure white.

Family Tanagridæ

SCARLET TANAGER.—*Piranga erythromelas*. 7.26

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire body flaming scarlet; wings and tail ebony black.

This, the most brilliantly plumaged bird in North America, is rather a local bird, sometimes being apparently absent from quite wide areas. I observed a number in Montgomery and Schenectady Counties, but have never seen more than half a

dozen in Albany County. Some seasons I have encountered none. Notwithstanding the brilliant colors of the male, he is an extremely sedate and retiring bird, making no effort at any time to flaunt his gay plumage. Even the most experienced ornithologist counts it an event when suddenly the flaming colors of the beautiful creature are discovered against the green of oak or chestnut trees. Some years the Scarlet Tanager is rarely seen, and at other times one will run across several, in an old road, perhaps, or an orchard, though open groves are its favorite abiding place. The male sheds his bright feathers the last of August and becomes for the rest of the year similar to the female—greenish-olive, brown, and pale yellow. During the breeding season the male is often heard to warble, faintly but pleasingly, some of his notes resembling those of the Robin.

The nest is rather carelessly constructed and placed on a limb, rarely more than twenty feet from the ground. I have found more nests in orchards than in woods.

SUMMER TANAGER; SUMMER RED-BIRD.—*Piranga rubra*. 7.50

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Plumage dull rose-red, becoming reddish-brown, or dusky on wings and tail. Female, similar to *erythromelas*, but lighter olive.

A pair of these birds bred near Hurstville in 1904 and another pair had their nest in Pine Hills in 1905. This is

given on the authority of Mr. H. A. Slack, of this City, who in both instances observed the birds throughout the Summer and saw the nests. Mr. Slack informs me that the Summer Red-bird is a regular, though not common, resident of the County. It is my opinion that this species once bred more numerous in the center of this State and in Massachusetts, though its northern range is now generally limited to New Jersey. Chapman says that it is common in the Southern States, "wandering casually to Nova Scotia." If it should be one's good fortune to come upon this bird it can be mistaken for no other. It appears a dull red all over; the Scarlet Tanager is much more brilliantly colored and has black wings and tail.

The nest and eggs of the Summer Tanager are similar to those of the Scarlet Tanager.

Family Fringillidæ

INDIGO BUNTING; INDIGO-BIRD.—*Cyanospiza cyanea*.

5.59

Field marks.—Entire body blue, deepest on upper parts, back showing brilliant greenish tinge in strong light; wings and tail dull black with grayish margins. Female, brownish, with faint tinge of indigo on wings and tail.

This lovely little bird is a common summer resident of Albany County, but seems to have a preference for roadsides, where, from mid-June to the latter part of August, the males are heard uttering their trilling warble from a telegraph wire



YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

PLATE XI

or tree-top. The nest, a grassy cup, is placed in a bush close to the ground. Four or five bluish-white eggs are laid.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK.—*Zamelodia ludoviciana*.

8.12

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Large angular spot of rose-red on breast, the lower point often extending in a narrow line down the white belly; head, throat, upper back and wings black; rump white; wings flecked with white; bill thick.

When the novice meets this strikingly handsome bird for the first time he is apt to believe that he has encountered some wanderer from the Tropics. Later, when the denizens of the feathered world have become known and it is found that the Rose-breasted Grosbeak is quite common in this vicinity, the student experiences a feeling of gratitude that Mother Nature has been so kind. The rose-red breast and the black and white upper parts of the male render identification easy; the female looks like an enlarged edition of a sparrow. The nest and eggs are very similar to those of the Scarlet Tanager but generally built lower, in shrubs or small trees. The male, during the love-season, warbles beautifully, the notes being loud, clear and mellow.

TOWHEE; CHEWINK.—*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*. 8.36

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire upper parts black; white markings on wings and tail; belly white; sides bright chestnut; keeps tail well elevated; speaks its name, "Che-wink," frequently, with the last syllable long drawn out; fond of keeping near the ground.

I confess to an extreme fondness for this unobtrusive and inoffensive feathered friend of my walks in many parts of our country. He has no wonderful accomplishments and is plainly, though handsomely, garbed in hues that reflect the tones of the earth. Occasionally he flies up on a low limb and utters his brisk *che-wink* once or twice, and if nothing particular is discovered in the vicinity, drops back to the ground and resumes his scratching for food. The noise the Towhee makes while poking among the leaves for nice, fat grubs and insects, is one of the familiar sounds that greet the ears of the stroller through old pastures that have become overgrown with birch sprouts and brambles, and along the outskirts of woods.

Late in the afternoon, Towhee likes to forsake the ground for a period, mount to the topmost branches of a medium-sized tree and sing its only song—if such it might be called. I remember that when walking one day afield with my mother, while I was quite a little chap, a Towhee was going through its limited repertoire on one of these nearby heights. "Do hear that sweet bird say 'Drink your tea,'" she exclaimed, and ever since that day, that has been the bird's song to me. Ralph Hoffman thinks that the song

"resembles the syllables *dick-yoo, chiddle-chiddle-chiddle*," but I believe it is better represented by the words *drink your tea-e-e-e-e*. The bird arrives in Albany County about the first of April and departs during the last week of October. The nest is placed on or near the ground and two broods are reared.

FOX SPARROW.—*Passerella iliaca*. 7.26

Migrant; more Common in the Fall

Field marks.—Largest of the Sparrows; everywhere blotched and marked with bright reddish-brown.

In the early Spring and late in the Fall this species is seen in this County as a migrant. Generally they keep well to the country, but not uncommonly they pause awhile in town or village gardens and scratch among the dead leaves in search of food. They are easily recognizable by their large size and colors, which closely resemble those of the sleek coat of Reynard.

SWAMP SPARROW.—*Melospiza georgiana*. 5.90

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Under parts light slaty-gray, unmarked, lighter on throat; crown bright reddish-brown; upper parts dark brown, streaked with black.

This is a somewhat characterless bird and difficult for the novice to identify. It frequents marshy places and the

nest is generally sunk deep in the long grass of a bog. The eggs are similar to those of the Song Sparrow.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW.—*Melospiza lincolni*. 5.75

Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Buff band across breast; under parts white; upper parts similar to Song and Swamp Sparrows.

This species is occasionally found in early Spring and mid-Fall in company with Song and other migrating Sparrows. Only the keen eye, behind an excellent field-glass, can identify it.

SONG SPARROW.—*Melospiza cinerea melodia*. 6.31

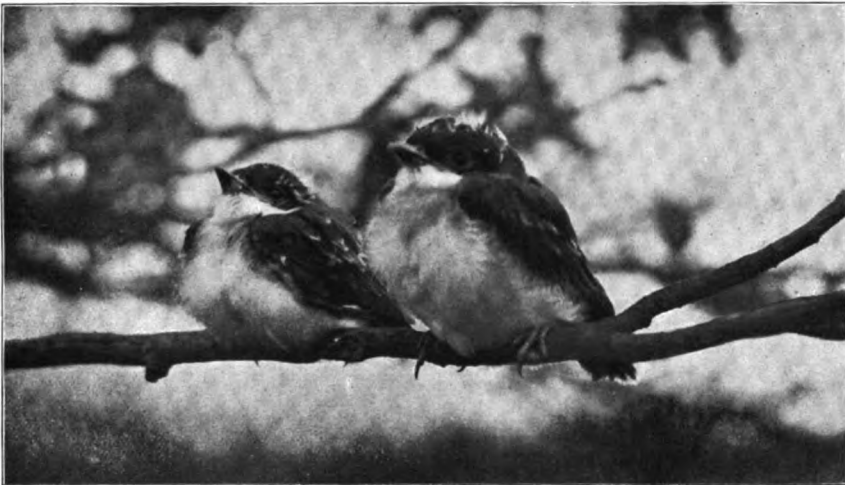
About the Most Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Large black spot in center of the brown-streaked breast; upper parts varying shades of brown.

It has always been a source of wonder to me that so few people seem to know the Song Sparrow, although it is one of the commonest birds in eastern North America. As early as the last of March this brave little brown citizen of the feathered world may be heard singing heartily in Washington Park, though the snow still shows in patches on distant uplands. His song has more of the element of Spring



FEMALE RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD ON NEST



YOUNG KINGBIRDS

PLATE XII

in it than any I know. To be sure the Bluebird is the accepted herald of the vernal season, but his song is cold, unemotional, and impersonal, while that of the Song Sparrow is warm, vibrant with suggestions of the awakening world, and is really the most cheery, hopeful sound in nature during the early Spring. Writers have vied with each other in eulogizing Song Sparrow's vocal powers. He is a true melodist, with a fine sense of measure and rhythm, which has caused him to be classed far above many more pretentious birds whose vocal efforts command attention by their variety and brilliance.

Song Sparrow is very modest and withal practical. His stage is generally a humble fence-post, and his lyrics are only interludes in a regular routine of household duties. Ofttimes the first nest is made and a complete set of eggs laid by the first of May. The fledglings are no sooner launched on the world than the laying of a second set of eggs is begun. By the first of July, preparations for the rearing of a third family are under way. I have found near Albany as late as August 17, nests containing fresh eggs, and the parent birds seemed much interested in what may have been, for all I know, their fourth housekeeping venture of the season. The nest is placed on or near the ground and is often a very pretty structure. One that I found some years ago was composed almost entirely of fresh, yellow straw.

In eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and in the counties of Albany, Columbia, Rensselaer, Washington, Fulton, and Montgomery, of New York State,

I found Song Sparrow from early Spring to late Autumn to be the most numerous of all the birds.

SLATE-COLORED JUNCO; BLACK SNOWBIRD.—*Junco hyemalis*. 6.27

Common in Spring and Fall

Field marks.—Upper parts, throat, and upper breast light slate color; lower breast white, giving vest-like effect; white outer tail-feathers show prominently in flight.

I have found the Black Snowbird very common about Albany, in the Fall and early Spring, but though they are supposed to be present in Winter, I have never encountered them hereabouts after the really cold weather had set in. Juncos breed in the Adirondacks, occasionally in the Catskills, and possibly in the higher Helderbergs.

In the Spring of 1904, I found these birds on Greenbush Heights, Rensselaer County, as late as the last week of April, and I harbored the hope of finding them breeding there later. But on my next visit to that locality—the middle of May—they had all disappeared. Juncos always travel about Albany in little companies. In late October and throughout the milder parts of November, Juncos are the most common birds in this section, along old roadsides and country lanes. In their summer home they have a slight song, but only utter a short metallic chirp hereabouts.

FIELD SPARROW.—*Spizella pusilla*. 5.68

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Bill bright reddish-brown; general color light slaty-gray on under parts, to reddish-brown on upper parts; gray line over eye; crown reddish-brown.

This very common species arrives early in Spring and departs late in the Fall. It is fond of dry fields and pastures where it builds its dainty nest on the ground, or in a low bush. The five eggs are white, finely speckled with light brown. Field Sparrow is a very sweet singer. Sometimes, in arid places, his mellow, chromatic performance is the only bird song heard.

CHIPPING SPARROW.—*Spizella socialis*. 5.38

Very Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Black line through eye; back brown, crown brighter shade; under parts gray.

In olden days, before the English Sparrow had become lord of the urban domain, Chippy was a fearless visitant in city door-yards, and even built his nest and reared the young in a sheltering shrub or fruit tree. Now, he keeps well out in the country, though he has sometimes held his own in large parks. A few remain in Washington Park and build their nests in the shrubbery. As his specific name implies Chippy is of a sociable disposition, showing no aversion to the

presence of man; indeed, he is rather partial to the big, ingenious animal, whose scattered bread crumbs make such delectable morsels of food. But Chippy cares nothing for a fight, and, having a natural repugnance for the noisy City Sparrow, he moved to rural parts and there now abides in peace and in great numbers.

Chipping Sparrows arrive in this County from the South the first week in April and replace the Tree Sparrows, which they closely resemble. Early in May the nest is built, and the four tiny blue eggs, speckled at the larger end with black, are laid. The nest is lined with horsehair, or tiny rootlets. It is a very pretty structure, but is sometimes very insecurely placed on the branch and is apt to be dislodged by rude winds. If this happens another nest is built and housekeeping proceeds as though nothing had occurred. Two or three broods are reared in a season.

TREE SPARROW.—*Spizella monticola*. 6.36

Common in Early Spring and Late Fall; Fairly Common
in Winter

Field marks.—Under parts light gray; single blackish spot in center of breast; upper parts similar to *socialis*; nearly an inch longer than the Chippy.

The best time to observe the Tree Sparrows is in March or November. They travel at this time in flocks and frequent light-grown woodsides; no other Sparrows are likely to be present. In midwinter they revel in hollows where cedars and stunted oaks abound. At this time they cannot

be mistaken, for no other Sparrow is hardy enough to follow them. By the time the Chipping Sparrows begin to think of nest building the Tree Sparrows have disappeared.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.—*Zonotrichia albicollis*.

6.75

Very Common During Spring and Fall Migrations

Field marks.—Large white patch covering throat; crown, striped black and white; line over the eye yellowish; bend of wing yellow; rest of plumage sparrow-like.

In late April and early May this is one of the commonest migrants in this County. They are large, handsome birds, with a brisk, cheery manner. While en route their only note is a metallic chip, but in their breeding grounds farther north they are regarded as beautiful singers. The White-throat has been called the Peabody-bird from its common song, which is heard in its breeding haunts.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW.—*Zonotrichia leucophrys*.

6.88

Uncommon Migrant

Field marks.—Head striped prominently with black and white; no throat patch.

This handsome Sparrow is found occasionally with little companies of White-throats in the early Spring and late Fall. Like its near relative it keeps close to the earth and is fond of

poking about among the fallen leaves in search of food. Care should be taken not to confound it with the White-throat, as both have striped crowns. If the bird looks like a Sparrow, has a striped head, and lacks the whitish throat-patch, you may be sure it is *leucophrys*. (See Hermit Thrush; Page 29).

SAVANNA SPARROW.—*Passerculus sandwichensis savanna*.
5.68

Not Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Pale yellow line over eye; bend of wing washed with bright yellow; thin, white line through center of crown; tail short.

This bird has been found breeding sparingly in Albany County. During the migrating season it is more numerous, but never abundant. The nest is built on the ground in open fields, and the eggs are bluish-white speckled with reddish brown.

VESPER SPARROW; BAY-WINGED BUNTING.—*Poæcetes gramineus*. 6.12

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire plumage prominently streaked with grayish-brown and blackish; keeps close to the earth and runs considerable distance before taking to wing, when it shows prominently the white outer tail-feathers, which form a V.

In the truck gardens and open fields west of Albany this bird is abundant. In repose it somewhat resembles the Song

Sparrow, but lacks the prominent spot in the center of the breast. In its low, jerky flight it is easily distinguished by the white feathers in the tail. It has a very pleasing song.

The nests that I have found have always been placed in ploughed ground. They were mere depressions in the soil, with a few grasses at the bottom, and the eggs numbered four or five; light slaty ground, blotched and marked with dark brown.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR.—*Calcarius lapponicus*. 6.24

Rare Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Upper parts buffy, streaked with blackish-brown; crescent of black spots across breast; under parts whitish; indistinct chestnut bar across nape; has sparrow-like appearance; if examined closely the long hind nail is discovered.

Sometimes a small flock of these Finches is seen hereabouts in Winter, and a few have been observed in early Spring and late Fall. They are not easy to identify.

SNOWFLAKE; SNOW BUNTING.—*Passerina nivalis*. 6.88

Irregular Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Entire bird appears white at distance; on closer view, wash of rusty on shoulders, brownish on top of head, lower two-thirds of primaries black, middle wing-coverts blackish.

In extremely snowy Winters large flocks of these hardy little birds sweep down from the Northland and invade Albany

County. At such times they are seen in the open fields feeding on the seeds of dried weeds. They are very active, fly rapidly, and it is very difficult to get near enough to observe them. At a distance they appear like large flakes of snow, blown by the wind.

PINE SISKIN.—*Spinus pinus*. 5.00

Irregular and Rare Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Feathers of upper parts black, margined with dull brown, forming streaks; under parts buffy, streaked with black; indistinct yellowish-white bar on wings; bill sharply pointed.

This bird is without doubt common enough about here some Winters, but I have only one record of its having been taken.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.—*Astragalinus tristis*. 5.10

Very Common Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Entire body brilliant yellow, varying in intensity according to age of bird; wings and crown ebony black; female, an olive and dull black edition of male; both throw themselves through the air in long, jerky lopes, accenting these movements with a four-syllable call.

This bird is known in some parts of the country as the Wild Canary; about Albany it seems to be known by no

other name than the "Shiner," an appellation which I never heard elsewhere. In June the male is in his most brilliant plumage and can hardly be outrivaled by any of our bright-colored birds. In August he sheds his yellow feathers, becomes a dull olive similar to the female, and remains in that garb throughout the Winter. Small flocks of Goldfinches spend the Winter hereabouts, but they keep in well sheltered places and are not often seen, though their faint call notes can be heard in the coldest weather. For some reason not thoroughly explained, the Goldfinch defers nest building until very late, the little cup-like structures rarely being found earlier than the first of July. The nest is placed in a fork of a tree, or bush, from five to twenty-five feet from the ground. The eggs are white. The Goldfinch has a faint warble which sounds somewhat like an echo of a Canary.

REDPOLL.—*Acanthis linaria*. 5.31

Irregular Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Ground color sparrow-like; crown deep red; chin black; rump, breast, and upper belly washed with rose.

I have never seen this bird in this part of the country, but am told by careful observers that it occasionally invades Albany County in cold Winters.

GREATER REDPOLL.—*Acanthis linaria rostrata*. 5.50

Very Rare Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Similar to above species, but averages slightly larger; upper parts darker; bill shorter, and thicker; can hardly be distinguished from the Lesser Redpoll, unless a close comparison of the skins is made.

Only one record; a very fine example was taken at Kenwood, February 15, 1907.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—*Loxia leucoptera*. 6.05

Irregular Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Main color dull rose-red; wings, tail, and middle of back, black; two white wing-bars; tips of mandibles very sharp and crossed.

AMERICAN CROSSBILL; RED CROSSBILL.—*Loxia curvirostra minor*. 6.20

Irregular Winter Visitant

Field marks.—General color dull red, brownish on back; wings and tail blackish; tips of mandibles crossed.

The above two closely allied species occasionally visit Albany County in extremely cold Winters, but they are not apt to come near the city and only the venturesome and

intrepid ornithologist will find them. A number have been observed in past years. Some Winters they are never seen.¹

ENGLISH SPARROW.—*Passer domesticus*. 6.35

Lamentably Common

Field marks.—Only Sparrow in city streets.

This active scavenger of our cities is known to everyone. In this County they are numerous far out into the country and in villages. They build their nests anywhere they can find a place, and breed from early Spring to Fall. The eggs present considerable variation, some being almost white and others so heavily speckled as to appear almost black.

PURPLE FINCH.—*Carpodacus purpureus*. 6.22

Common in Early Spring

Field marks.—Looks like a Sparrow that has just had a bath in raspberry juice; on close view every feather is found suffused with brilliant rose; rump bright rose; back, wings and tail brownish.

This bird may occasionally be present here in Winter and may even breed here, but I have no records to this effect.

¹Since writing the above, I have secured an authentic record of this species having been observed in Winter, in Washington Park; there is apparently but one record.

In April, 1907, I found them very common in Washington Park and in the woods and fields west of the City. They indulged in their faint warbling, the while feeding on the tender buds of the trees.

PINE GROSBEEK.—*Pinicola enucleator leucura*. 9.10

Irregular Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Bill short and thick; entire plumage rose-red; center of back flecked with black; wings dark brown, barred with white; tail deeply forked.

Specimens have been taken for the State in this County.

Family Icteridæ

PURPLE GRACKLE; CROW BLACKBIRD.—*Quiscalus quiscula*. 13.50

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire bird black, reflecting in certain lights shades of lustrous green and steel-blue.

Just after the ice has gone out of the river, and while small patches of snow still remain in cool hollows, the bold and energetic Crow Blackbird returns from the Southland and adds color to the bleak, early spring landscape. At this time he

can be seen from a long distance, either walking sedately about the pallid, watery low-lands, or swinging on the heights of some naked tree; but later, when the nest is built, and the leaves are all unfolded, he is more often heard than seen. I have never discovered the Grackles indulging in any sort of vocalism, though their common notes, which resemble the squeaking of a rusty hinge worked by intermittent winds, fall not unpleasantly on the ear at a time when more delicate forms of bird life are rare. Grackles are inclined to be gregarious, small colonies dwelling together even in the breeding season, in gentlest amity. The secluded tops of pine trees are generally chosen for nesting places.

Though rather bulky, the nests are well made, comfortable affairs, and are zealously guarded by both parent birds. The eggs number from three to six, are bluish-gray, or greenish-white, spotted and streaked in a fantastic manner with black and dark brown.

Purple Grackles arrive in Albany about the middle of March, and depart late in November.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD.—*Scolecophagus carolinus*. 9.55

Rare in Spring and Fall

Field marks.—In Spring, lustrous steel-blue; in Autumn, feathers of upper parts margined with dull brown, giving bird a rusty appearance; eye dull white.

This bird likes about the same haunts as the Red-wing; so if you see a Blackbird in such a place and it lacks the red

shoulder-straps you may be sure it is the Rusty. The female is a slaty gray.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE.—*Icterus galbula*. 7.50

Very Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Head, throat, upper back, wings, and tail, lustrous black; breast, belly, and lower back bright orange; female much duller, the orange being replaced by dull yellow.

Its brilliant coloration and penchant for the elms of park and village roadside have made the Baltimore Oriole fairly well known to almost everyone. The species is extremely abundant both in and all about Albany and is liable to remain so, as the long, pendulous nests are generally placed so far out on the tips of the slender, drooping branches that the small boy cannot reach them, and the birds keep at such a height most of the time that the cats rarely have any luck in their direction. The Baltimore arrives here during the first week in May, the sixth being the earliest date in my note-book. Strangely, when they first get here from the South, the tops of tall chestnut woods are their favorite foraging place for several days. Then they like to enjoy a short period, flashing about among the white bloom of the plum trees of the garden, the males vying with each other before the females, after which, mating accomplished, the work of nest building is begun. This structure is too well known to require description, and almost every one has heard the musical peeping of the young after they get old enough to cry for food. Perhaps

one of the fluffy, yellowish fledglings has fluttered down into your yard and you have rescued it from some voracious cat; Baltimore has then given expression to his gratitude by a series of long, mellow, whistling notes, and you have given one more evidence that his confidence in man has not been betrayed.

Five or six much elongated eggs are laid; ground bluish, etched and speckled with umber.

ORCHARD ORIOLE.—*Icterus spurius*. 7.32

Not Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire head, throat, and upper back, black; breast, belly, lower back, and lesser wing-coverts, bright reddish-chestnut; wings dark brown. Female, much duller.

This bird seems to be a somewhat irregular resident; I had been about here for five years before encountering one, and this was on May 19, 1907. During the same Spring several were observed in Washington Park. I am told by others that some years *spurius* is apparently not present in this section. The notes of the Orchard are similar to those of the Baltimore, yet with such a difference in tone as at once to distinguish them to the keen listener. Because of this fact I always hear the Orchard before seeing it.

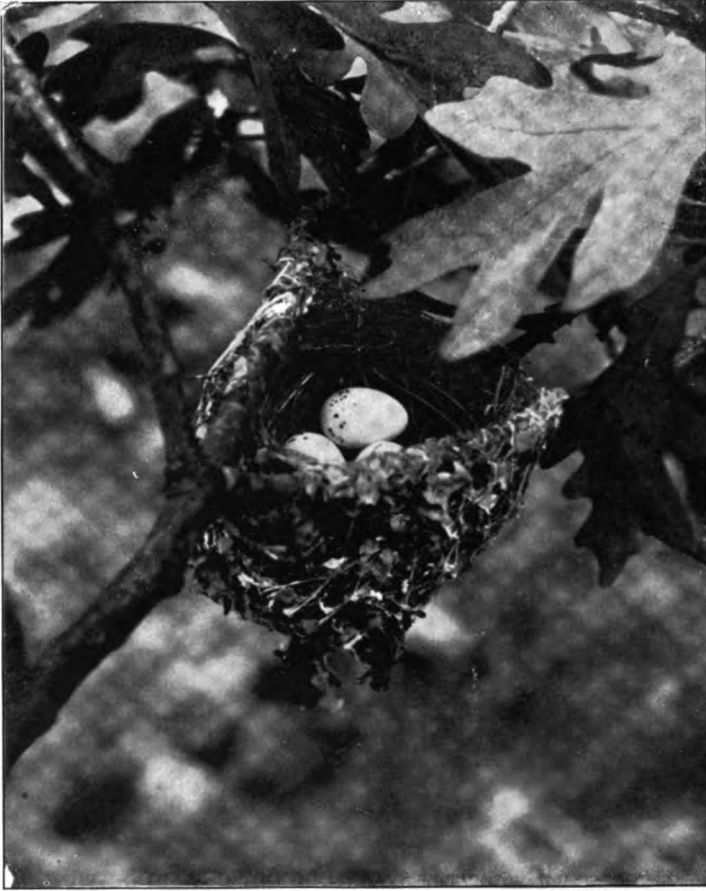
The nest is a shallow basket, woven of fine grasses, and swung among the branches of a tree, generally in an orchard; eggs, four or five, similar to *galbula*.

MEADOWLARK.—*Sturnella magna*. 10.76

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Under parts bright yellow, with black crescent across the breast; upper parts brown, streaked with black; white outer feathers of short tail show conspicuously in flight.

In the broad meadows where the daisies, clover, black-eyed Susans, and wild carrot hold dominion, the Meadowlark is very common throughout the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys. They arrive almost as soon as the snow has disappeared. In the Fall they become gregarious and, when the air grows frosty, depart for the South. Our bird has few lark-like characteristics, being partial to the earth rather than the sky, and flying low with rapid and somewhat laborious wing strokes. To the observer it appears a plain, brownish bird, as it is extremely difficult to approach near enough to catch even a glimpse of the yellow breast and black crescent. The Meadowlark's song is a faint, sweet whistle—so faint, in fact, that when quite near to one it seems a long distance away. When not on the ground the bird likes to sit on fence-posts and low trees bordering the meadow. Meadowlark is one of the earliest spring arrivals in Albany County. The nest is made of dry grass and placed under a tussock on the ground. Five or six large, white eggs, spotted with brown, are the nest complement.



NEST AND EGGS OF RED-EYED VIREO

PLATE XIII

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD.—*Agelaius phœniceus*. 9.50

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire bird black, save a scarlet patch, edged with buff and white, at the bend of the wing.

The *cong-a-ree* of the Red-wing is heard hereabouts along the middle of April, but it is not until the latter part of May, or early in June, when the long lush grass and cattails have grown rank in marshes and along the edges of ponds, that the nests are built. These are neatly woven, deep, grassy baskets, generally set in a bush low over the water, or sunk in the long grass of a bog. When the first brood has taken to wing a second nest is built about the first of July. Red-wings are extremely sociable, and almost always live together in colonies. In the Fall they gather into flocks, and, after wheeling about in gay companies for a short time, depart for more salubrious climes. The black plumage and bright red shoulder-straps of the male, and the plain brown hues of the female are familiar to every one who has frequented country places.

COWBIRD.—*Molothrus ater*. 7.92

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire upper parts warm, dark brown; rest of plumage black, showing greenish and bluish reflections in strong light.

This is the true parasite of birdland, in that it never makes a nest, the eggs being deposited in the nests of other birds.

Yet despite the bad reputation which Cowbird has gained and which he invariable sustains, the male is a trim and handsome fellow. Lengthy studies of this interesting bird have been made by many close observers, therefore I will take leave of him by saying that he and his slightly smaller, slate-colored mate are everywhere common in Albany County. The eggs are grayish-white, thickly speckled with black. The most devoted ornithologist has never yet succeeded in determining how many are laid in a season. Rarely more than one or two are deposited in one nest.

BOBOLINK.—*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*. 7.25

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Large blotches of creamy-white on back and nape; rest of plumage black.

Wherever grassy fields abound, the exhilarating, delightful, but hopelessly indescribable music of the Bobolink is heard in Albany County. Go out into the country some early June day, where the air is heavy with the perfume of red-clover, and listen to Bobolink's perplexing melodies; if you are sad at heart, life will instantly seem better, even gay. You will know him by this description; he looks like a Blackbird that has been caught in a snowstorm and still retains the white crystals on his glossy back. The female is brownish-gray, and in the Fall the male assumes the same garb. When they go south they become Reedbirds and are shot by the thousands for the damage they do to the rice crops, and, incidentally, for their tender flesh, which is said to be excellent. All the

same, we of the North always welcome the return of Bobolink in the Spring, and I feel a distinct pleasure in recording that he is as common as ever, notwithstanding the animosity felt toward him by Southerners.

The nest is made in a tussock of grass and is very hard to find. Eggs, four to seven, elongated, grayish-white ground, speckled and blotched with pale olive and dark brown.

Family Corvidæ

Subfamily Corvinæ

AMERICAN CROW.—*Corvus americanus*. 19.30

Common Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Bird entirely black; on close view and in favorable light, plumage iridescent steel-blue, or purplish.

“Who knows

The humor of the Crows,
As forth they fly in bands
Marauding o’er the lands?

“They lurk, they lie in wait,
They ponder, they debate;
I hear their laugh of scorn
Among the sprouting corn:

“Do they despise mankind
As creatures of weak mind
Who plant good corn in rows
To feed the Crows?”

If the Crows feel a contempt for mankind they certainly can show "probable cause," as the New England magistrates say, for they have been under the ban ever since the first of their number was discovered pulling up the farmer's tender young corn. Like many geniuses, Mister Crow has been misunderstood; in other words his qualities have not been appreciated. The Crow is a bird of parts; he is versatile. His predilection for corn-sprouts is only a slight indication of his epicurean tastes. And this is nothing strange, for he has a large brain compared to the majority of the Passeres. Others of his family are distinguished for the same characteristics, as his near relative, the Blue Jay, also has a very large brain and the same marvelously developed auditory organs.

The versatility of the Crow is shown in the way in which he adapts himself to conditions. He is a winter resident in Albany County and, when the food in the woods and fields fails, he knows how to fish in the river. I have frequently seen this operation. My journal for March 14, 1904, reads: "I observed Crows fishing in Island Creek. One hovered over the water, dropped down to the surface, and went to the ice to eat what it had caught." While sojourning at Lake George, I saw Crows fishing almost every day.

Why cast aspersion upon the ebony and perfectly proper plumage of the Crow? Whether battling against the March or November winds, or posed against the white background of Winter, he is always trim, well groomed, and altogether admirable. He also has an independent air and shows his freedom in every movement. I say that he is a permanent resident of Albany County, but ornithologists agree in



ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEEK

PLATE XIV

attributing to him a certain nomadic temperament. In a word, the Crows that breed hereabouts are supposed to have spent the Winter in more southern quarters, while those that are seen about here during the Winter may probably go a little farther north to establish their families. The female Crow is an admirable mother. No one of our feathered folk is more solicitous of the home and the eggs and fledglings than the despised Crow; in fact, many a human mother might learn a lesson from the raucous bird of black plumage. In this connection I might mention that the Crow is one of nature's successes. The species is common everywhere in North America from the fur countries to Mexico. Closely allied species are found all over Europe, and it might be cited that Pierre Loti in his book *L'Inde, Sans les Anglais*, demonstrates that the Crow fairly overruns the whole of India.

Our bird is equally common in Albany County. Mr. William G. Van Zandt, a local painter of horses, never regards his picture as complete unless three Crows are visible in the landscape. As further evidence, I have found four or five Crow's nests in an acre of woods within two miles of this city. On the wooded heights of Rensselaer County they are equally prolific breeders. Although the cursory observer sees a Crow's nest as only an awkward bundle of sticks, yet it is finely constructed, the interior being lined with delicate grapevine bark and other soft vegetable fiber. The eggs are lovely examples of coloration, the blue of the sky, the green of early vegetation, and the soft browns of Autumn foliage being marvelously intermingled in the shell markings.

I alluded above to the occasional fishing habits of our common Crow. Herein is food for reflection for the evolutionist, for the North American avifauna contains the regular Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*) which keeps Lent throughout the year by living entirely on a fish diet. I may say that the Fish Crow is smaller than *Corvus americanus* and has a cracked voice, which more than anything else distinguishes him from his near relative; but this is hardly apropos of my subject, as the range of the Fish Crow does not extend farther north than southern Connecticut, and he is never seen in Albany County.

Subfamily Garrulinæ

BLUE JAY.—*Cyanocitta cristata*. 11.75

Common Summer Resident; Rare in Winter

Field marks.—Wings and tail bright blue, barred with black and white; upper parts bluish-gray; pronounced occipital crest; throat gray; black collar about neck; under parts whitish.

The Blue Jay is hardly second to the Crow in cunning, ways that are peculiar, and general knowledge of the habits and proclivities of his natural enemy, man.

The ornithologist is rather inclined to make friends with the Jay if occasion admits, but the sportsman harbors for him a contempt which generally means sure death if he gets within range of his gun. You see the Jay has such well-developed ears, and such a clear vision, that he takes it upon himself to

act as a sentinel of the forest; and, when all the leaves have turned to crimson and gold, when the Ruffed Grouse is drumming, and Bob-white has mustered his numerous family into whirring bands, the Jay remains on guard on some leafy height and invariably sounds the alarm note as the huntsman appears in the land. This is a wild, exasperating scream like to nothing else in the woods. It is immediately repeated by other unseen Jays and there is a scurrying of the feathered folk all through the forest. The gunner just naturally gets mad and, if he can, sends a charge of shot in the direction of the enemy of his sport. But to the credit of the Jay's shrewdness be it said, that he generally manages to slip away on skilful wings to a place of safety before "the fowler's piece has marked his flight to do him wrong."

But if the Jay is the guardian of the other birds during the shooting season, he plays a different role in the Spring. While he is convenient to the birds in the Autumn, oftentimes saving several lives, they do not seem to take him very seriously as an altruist, remembering doubtless the trouble he has caused during the breeding season. Now the murder is out! Blue Jay has a penchant for other birds' eggs, especially those of birds smaller than he. He eats as many as his appetite demands, and then pecks holes in the others, through malice aforethought or malicious mischief. Still he is a zealous guardian of his own home, which is a picturesque structure of sticks and tender vines, placed in any desirable fork of low shrub or lofty tree.

The Jay is a permanent resident of Albany County. In the Winter he is wild and distant, and is more frequently seen in the Fall, than in Spring or Summer.

In the cold season he lives on rotten apples, frozen berries, and acorns, that he may dig out from under the snow. In the vernal time he is so shy and wary that, when seen, he appears more like a ghost of some past Autumn than a real bird interested in plain household duties. But should the intruder approach his nest, both he and his mate forget all prudence, cunning, and every trick of the woodland that they know, and become bunches of feathered frenzy.

The notes of the Jay in Fall and Winter are invariably harsh, but during the love-season the male has a low, sweet, flute-like call, which is often modulated into a beautiful song. Jays kept in cages have been known to whistle airs and to imitate perfectly the mewling of a cat, the barking of a dog, and the crying of a baby. But the Jay is in his glory only when abroad in the Autumn woods—on the lookout for man and his gun.

Family Alaudidæ

PRAIRIE HORNED LARK.—*Otocoris alpestris praticola*.

7.25

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Throat yellow; pointed tufts of feathers on sides of crown, extending backward; broken, black band across upper breast; lores and ear-coverts black; upper parts light, buffy-brown, verging to black and forming wavy lines; under parts buffy-white.

This bird of the Mississippi Valley has extended its range and is now seen regularly in Albany County, though more

numerously in the early Spring. It is found here through the breeding season, but no nests have been discovered, to my knowledge. The nest is made of grass, placed on the ground, and contains three or four eggs, bluish-gray, finely speckled with light grayish-brown.

SUBORDER CLAMATORES

Family Tyrannidæ

LEAST FLYCATCHER; CHEBEC.—*Empidonax minimus*.
5.40

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Upper parts olive-green with tinge of gray; under parts ashy-white; belly very slightly washed with yellow; two whitish wing-bars.

Did you ever climb up into the protecting arms of some old apple tree and discover there, amidst the pink and white blossoms and tender yellow-green leaves, the lovely little nest of the Chebec? That is how, in the long ago, I found my first Least Flycatcher's nest, and as I gazed at the grayish cup with its four creamy-white eggs, I wondered which was the most marvelous, the tiny bird's creation, the blue sky beyond it, or the blossoms that hung over it, like a bridal canopy.

The apple tree was on my grandmother's farm, and woven into the nest were two nice feathers from one of my grandmother's white hens. Chebec lives in Albany County from

the first of April until the first of October, and builds the same kind of a nest in a fruit tree, a maple, or the fork of most any other tree, where the foliage is thick. He has rather a snappy personality on account of his way of suddenly darting from his lookout and seizing small winged insects in the air.

He returns instantly to his perch, swallows the fly, flirts his tail, utters a brisk *che-bec*, and is ready for further business. He has a few gurgling notes, a single call, and is in fact a typical example of the Flycatcher family, although he is the smallest of the tribe.

ALDER FLYCATCHER.—*Empidonax traillii alnorum*. 6.09

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Under parts grayish-white, washed lightly with pale yellow; upper parts dark olive-green; two dull-white wing-bars; slightly larger than the Least Flycatcher; manners similar.

A powerful field-glass or a gun are the only articles that will aid one to differentiate between this bird and the Chebec, unless one can learn the calls of the two birds, which are dissimilar. *Alnorum* has only recently been given a place by itself in our avifauna, the bird in 1895 not having been given its definite status. It is wilder and more retiring than the Least Flycatcher and is rarely seen away from moist, wooded places.

The nest is not quite so finely built as that of *minimus* and is placed in the crotch of a low bush; eggs, four, creamy white, lightly spotted.

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER.—*Empidonax flaviventris*.
5.63

Occasional Spring and Fall Visitant

Field marks.—Under parts sulphur-yellow; upper parts similar to preceding species; upper mandible black, lower whitish.

This species is occasionally seen in this County about the first of June and the first of September. It may breed here, but there are no records. Identification is hardly possible, unless the bird is in hand and compared with the two preceding species.

WOOD PEWEE.—*Contopus virens*. 6.54

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Upper parts dark, with faint tinge of olive and brown; wings and tail dark gray; two white wing-bars; under parts, whitish, verging to grayish on sides.

The beautiful lichen-covered nest of the Wood Pewee is one of the treasures that may award the search of the bird student in this vicinity. The nest is always saddled on a limb and the eggs are white with a wreath of dark markings about the larger end. The Wood Pewee is slightly larger than the Chebec and considerably smaller than the Phoebe, otherwise it is similar in appearance. If one can learn the plaintive song, or call, of the Wood Pewee, identification will always be easy.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER.—*Nuttallornis borealis*. 7.40

Rare Transient Visitor

Field marks.—Tuft of pale yellowish feathers on either flank, showing rather conspicuously; dull white line down center of breast, sometimes slightly yellowish; rest of plumage dark grayish-olive, very slightly lighter on under parts.

This species is considerably larger than any Flycatcher yet named and bears no resemblance to the Phoebe, Great-crest, or Kingbird; therefore it should be easily identified, as its characteristics are more pronounced than in any other member of the Flycatcher family.

PHEBE.—*Sayornis phæbe*. 7.00

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Haunts old bridges, sheds, or rocky canyons; upper parts dark smoky, with slight olive cast; under parts white with possible yellowish cast; on alighting, constantly flits its tail.

This gentle bird is one of several that have found man congenial and in consequence has, to a considerable extent, changed his habits since the primeval wilds gave place to farms and villages. He never invades the city, but out-buildings in rural places are now his favorite haunts. Here he builds his beautiful, mossy nest, which is either glued against a rafter or plastered on a beam, and rears his family in safety. His predilection for old country bridges has given



YOUNG KINGFISHERS

PLATE XV

him the name, in some quarters, of "Bridge Phoebe." Once successfully established, the Phoebe returns year after year to the same place and rears his young. I knew an old bridge, in early days, under which a pair of Phoebes builded their nests for several successive years. As surely as April came I always found them there at work on their domicile; and before the month was over the five white eggs were laid. Then, as is Phoebe's custom, another and sometimes a third brood was reared. Phoebe's nest is of such a character as to invite the presence of vermin, and for this reason they rarely inhabit the same nest twice. I say that my Phoebes returned year after year; but once upon a time Farmer Babcock drew an extra heavy load of stone over the bridge, and the nest and its contents fell into the muddy stream. I found the wrecked home and feared that the birds would desert the locality, but no, not so; they constructed another nest against an adjoining beam and the full complement of eggs was laid. Incubation was well under way when a very heavy and continued rain came on, the fastenings of the nest were loosened and it shared the fate of the first. No other nest was made and the birds disappeared. Next year I watched anxiously for their return, but they did not come back, and for several years, as long as I knew those haunts, the old bridge remained a silent place. That was a long time ago and I have often wondered, should I go back there, if I should find another generation of Phoebes breeding in that spot.

The Phoebe is not altogether "civilized." I have found them breeding in the mountains with their nests placed under shelving racks and close to roaring torrents. This was their

probable mode of building when the Indians were the only inhabitants of North America.

Phoebe is a common summer resident of Albany County, arriving about the first of April and remaining until October.

CRESTED FLYCATCHER; GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER.

Myiarchus crinitus. 9.00

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Has direct and even flight; very unapproachable; upper parts brown, tinged with olive and grayish; throat and breast light gray; belly sulphur-yellow.

This is one of the real aristocrats among the birds. He has, however, one or two habits which lay him open to the charge of eccentricity, although his mellow call in the orchard has a genial ring and his decorum is irreproachable. One of his peculiarities is his insistence that there be a cast-off snake skin in the lining of his nest. Why he does this has never been satisfactorily explained. Probably Great-crest doesn't himself know just why he does it; but one thing is sure, and this is, that very few nests have been found without the snake skin. The nest is built in a hollow tree, the former quarters of a Woodpecker generally being utilized.

The Great-crest is a bold, handsome fellow, the yellow of his under parts being especially striking. His eggs present beautiful examples of coloration and quaint markings. He is never anywhere common. The first living example I ever

saw was in May, 1904, in an orchard adjoining the Schenectady turnpike, about five miles from Albany. There was evidently a nest thereabouts, but I could not find it.

KINGBIRD.—*Tyrannus tyrannus*. 8.51

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Grayish upper parts, becoming blackish on head and upper tail-coverts; orange-red crest, partially concealed; tail black, tipped with white; under parts white to ashy; given to spreading its tail and partially opening its wings while perched; fond of hovering in air with wings in rapid motion.

I never understood why the Kingbird should be called a tyrant for I have always found him merely an ardent, home-loving bird, never intruding on the rights of other feathered folk, unless they encroached upon his domain. If they did, there was a fight, and Kingbird showed only an admirable spunk. He is a bird of the Summer-time and is in his glory in some old, dry orchard where he engages in his profession of fly-catching the livelong day. Sometimes the nest is placed on the branch of a sycamore tree over a stream or pond, but is more often built in an orchard tree. Four or five white eggs, boldly splashed with dark brown, are the nest complement.

ORDER MACROCHIRES

SUBORDER TROCHILI

Family Trochilidæ

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD.—*Trochilus colubris*.

3.70

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Smallest bird and only Hummer found in Albany County; upper parts bright lustrous green; throat glistening ruby-red, the feathers resembling tiny, metallic scales; rest of plumage grayish; violet tinge on wings and tail.

This gay little sprite, familiar to everyone in city or country who owns a flower garden, is the only representative of its great and beautiful family found east of the Rocky Mountains. It is quite numerous throughout its habitat, which includes Albany County. But the finding of the wonderful nest, which is made of silky vegetable down and covered with tiny lichens until it resembles a knot on a branch, is such an uncommon event that it is always treasured in the mind of the most experienced student. I once, however, knew an old country mansion, overgrown with Trumpet Creepers, where the lively Hummers literally swarmed, and never a season passed but



WOODCOCK .

PLATE XVI

that several nests were discovered in the great elms about the place. Ruby-throat is pugnacious and full of courage and does not hesitate to tackle any bird, regardless of its size, if it is found encroaching upon the domain of flowers. Contrary to popular impression, the little creature feeds upon insects as well as the nectar within the petals. Two white, elongated eggs, about the size of a small pea, are laid.

SUBORDER CYPSELI

Family Micropodidæ

CHIMNEY SWIFT.—*Chatura pelagica*. 5.43

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—High up in the air, looks like tiny, black, cigar-shaped airship, with long, rapidly-moving wings; utters constant twittering in flight; tail short and tipped with spines; flies down chimneys; never alights outside.

There are probably few country chimneys in Albany County that do not contain nests of this Swift. These are little saucer-like affairs made of sticks stuck together with saliva supplied by the bird. If you want to see a Chimney Swift's nest, climb to the top of some old farm house along in June and look down the chimney. You will be quite apt to discover two or three, containing four or five white eggs, or the young.

SUBORDER CAPRIMULGI

Family Caprimulgidæ

NIGHTHAWK.—*Chordeiles virginianus*. 10.00

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—White bar on wings; broad white band across throat; tail forked; rest of bird appears blackish in flight.

On summer mornings, between the hours of four and five o'clock, when day is just breaking, the harsh peet of the Nighthawk is a familiar sound over Albany. So shrill and penetrating is the bird's cry that it can be heard over the hum of the trolley cars and the rattle of the early-going milk-carts. Persons who never give any sort of a bird a thought, frequently are seen to turn their gaze upward in questioning wonder, as though they would like to know what this bold, aerial marauder might be. Sometimes the birds swoop down close to the tops of the buildings, but straightway sweep rapidly upward, sometimes to a great height. In the early evening the birds are just as common over the City, though their presence is not so noticeable, for the noise of the city is greater.

In performing these evolutions the Nighthawk is simply foraging for flies and gnats, which he engulfs in his wide mouth; in other words he eats as he flies; not because he hasn't time to stop, but because that is the way it was ordained he should live. Nighthawks appear to me to be only partly nocturnal; I have never heard them in the middle of the night, and have never encountered them in the extreme light of the

day. I have observed Nighthawks over Philadelphia, Boston, New York and several other cities of the East, quite as numerous as over Albany.

The Nighthawk builds no nest, laying its two light-marbled eggs on a flat rock, or graveled roof.

WHIP-POOR-WILL.—*Antrostomus vociferus*. 9.75

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Shouts its name in the night; narrow white line across upper breast; entire bird looks black; (is really mottled brown); form very similar to that of the Nighthawk.¹

The weird cry of the Whip-poor-will is occasionally heard in the wooded parts of Albany County, though it cannot be regarded as common hereabouts. In appearance and structure it closely resembles its near relative the Nighthawk, but its habits are different, preferring the darkest woods for its haunts. In the early evening it will approach the farmhouse, but is never seen near cities. Two eggs are laid among the brown leaves on the ground in woods.

¹If the student wishes to know the diagnostic features of the Whip-poor-will and Nighthawk he should make a

comparative study of the skins in some museum.

ORDER PICI

Family Picidæ

NORTHERN FLICKER; GOLDEN-WINGED WOODPECKER.—

Colaptes auratus luteus. 12.00

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Flies in very long lopes, drawing up abruptly at the end of each; large white patch on rump shows in flight; scarlet band across back of neck; black crescent across breast; underside of wings and tail bright yellow; back light chocolate-brown, barred with black; head plain brown; under parts heavily spotted with dark brown; bill long and curved.

Early in the Spring, when lovemaking is in order, the Yellow-hammer, as it is sometimes called, shouts its name, *flicker*, from arboreal heights. At this time and all through the breeding season he is a true Woodpecker, but in midsummer he descends to the open field and digs for worms like a Robin. In the Autumn when chokecherries and the fruit of the pepperidge tree are ripe, great numbers gather and devour the luscious fruit. Then they break up into small flocks and fly south. The nest is in a hollow limb, which is generally excavated by the birds themselves. From six to ten glossy white eggs are laid. A Flicker family, just before the young are ready to take to flight, is a noisy bunch.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER.—*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*.
9.75

Very Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire head and upper breast deep crimson; upper back, wings, and tail dark bluish-gray; band on wings, rump, and belly white.

The brilliant hues and noble proportions of this bird, the most striking of its family, should serve to identify it instantly even to the most casual observer. Unfortunately, opportunities for observing it in this section of the State are very few and far between, as long ago it receded into the wilder portions of northern New York and upper New England where natural enemies are not so abundant. I had believed until recently that not an individual would be found in this County, but my friend, Mr. Gardner C. Leonard, has happily informed me that a pair had their nest near his country home in Altamont during the Summer of 1907. The birds were unmolested and reared their brood in safety. Doubtless other pairs will be found in the strictly rural parts of the County. Anyone found disturbing these beautiful birds should be immediately punished to the fullest extent of the law. Red-heads are said to winter occasionally in this State.

From four to six white eggs are laid in a hollow tree.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER.—*Sphyrapicus varius*. 8.56

Fairly Common Spring and Fall Migrant

Field marks.—Crown and throat bright red; belly yellow; rest of plumage black and white; habits same as other Woodpeckers.

During the Spring and Autumn migrations this alert and handsome bird is frequently seen in Albany County. Several stop long enough in Washington Park every Spring to bore a few holes in the bark of the white birches and sip the sap. In the Fall they like chokecherries, wild grapes, and the purple fruit of the pepperidge tree.

Five to seven white eggs are laid in the hollow of a tree, generally very high up.

DOWNY WOODPECKER.—*Dryobates pubescens medianus*. 6.80

Common in Summer, Rare in Winter

Field marks.—Black and white, barred and streaked; scarlet patch on nape of neck.

Here we have the smallest of our Woodpeckers, everywhere common in Albany County. Although it is claimed that Downy spends the Winter throughout New England and New York State, I always count it an extremely rare event when I meet an example hereabouts in Winter. During May a great many are present and a number remain to breed. The small size, and black and white plumage serve to identify the species.

From four to six white eggs are laid, in the hollow of a dead limb, or stump.

HAIRY WOODPECKER.—*Dryobates villosus*. 9.40

Very Rare Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Differs from Downy only in size and minor details of markings; nearly three inches longer than Downy; bill is nearly an inch and a quarter in length, while Downy's is about two-thirds of an inch in length.

Despite the much larger size of *villosus* even the practiced field student is often puzzled to determine its identity, unless Downy happens to be in view at the same time, which is a rare occurrence.

The bird seen about Albany, however, is pretty sure to be the Downy. I have encountered the Hairy but three or four times in this locality.

The nesting habits are the same as the Downy.

ORDER COCCYGES

SUBORDER ALCYONES

Family Alcedinidæ

BELTED KINGFISHER.—*Ceryle alcyon*. 13.00

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Broad bluish-gray band across breast, separating white throat and belly; upper parts bluish-gray; bill long; tail short; crown feathers long and often erected into a pronounced crest; only notes a harsh rattle, usually uttered on the wing.

The harsh rattle of the Kingfisher is heard along the Hudson River and all the inland ponds and streams throughout this section; in fact, the species appears to be more common hereabouts than in any other portions of the State, or New England, where I have wandered. There is no mistaking him for any other bird. The long wings and beak, the white-banded, bluish-gray plumage, short tail, and erect feathers of the head are distinguishing features. Perched on a limb or stump, over or alongside the water, the handsome Fisher will remain almost motionless for some time, and then, discovering a finny tid-bit near the surface, he will suddenly dart down, seize the fish in his beak, fly away to another

point of advantage, and gulp it down with evident relish. Sometimes the fish, if it is very small, is swallowed on the wing.¹

The Kingfisher digs a long tunnel about five inches in diameter in a sand bank, and at a distance of between five and seven feet from the outer world, hollows out a little cavern where the eggs are laid on the bare sand. I have dug out several Kingfishers and have always found them to be extremely devoted to their home. Once, after excavating seven feet into a bank, my spade suddenly exposed the nest-cavern and the female sitting on her eggs. Although given every opportunity to escape she remained sitting until I lifted her off with my hands. Even then she struggled fiercely, using beak and claws, and was loath to leave the beloved domicile. From five to seven glossy white eggs are laid. I have discovered that the shell has a beautiful pinkish cast, which does not disappear after the contents have been removed. A set of eggs in a collection I once made retained this rosy hue for several years.

¹There is evidence that the Kingfisher, when the flesh of the fish has been digested, disgorges pellets of bones, scales, and other indigestible matter, after the manner of several of the Raptores. Messrs G.

L. Richard and G. H. Chadwick found a number of these fish-bone pellets along a creek near Nassau and were convinced that they were disgorged by the Kingfisher, as no other fish-eating bird frequents that stream.

SUBORDER CUCULI

Family Cuculidæ

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO.—*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*.
11.83

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO.—*Coccyzus americanus*. 12.20

Fairly Common Summer Residents

Field marks.—Long slender birds; bills slightly curved; upper parts grayish-brown; under parts white; *erythrophthalmus* has red eye-ring and black bill; lower mandible of *americanus* yellow and wing-coverts reddish-brown.

The only sure way of differentiating between these birds is to bring them close enough with your glass to note the color of the lower mandible. Slight variations in plumage which I have not indicated, can only be discovered by an examination of the skins. Our Cuckoos are extremely graceful birds, but very shy and retiring.

They never utter their name, like the European species, and their only song is a series of rather lugubrious syllables of a deep contralto character. The nest is a slight but artistic affair, made of coarse sticks and twigs, and placed in a tangle of vines or some low, scrubby tree. Four greenish-blue eggs are laid, often several days apart.

I once found a nest containing one fresh egg, one egg in an advanced embryonic stage, and two fully-fledged young.

ORDER RAPTORES

SUBORDER STRIGES

Family Bubonidæ

SNOWY OWL.—*Nyctea nyctea*. 25.00

Irregular Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Entire bird white, with more or less faint barring of brown on head and back; looks pure white to observer; eyes yellow; strictly diurnal.

Several have been taken in recent years. I have no record of its having been seen during the past two years.

GREAT HORNED OWL.—*Bubo virginianus*. 22.00

Not Uncommon Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Largest owl found here, except the Snowy; ear-tufts pronounced, nearly two inches in length; eyes yellow; disk buffy; general color, dark brown, or black intermingled with tawny; over-layer of gray in some specimens; under parts lighter and barred; whitish collar across upper breast.

This Owl can be mistaken for no other bird, because of its great size and pronounced characteristics. It is fond of the deep, dark woods, though not infrequently, at night, makes

a sally into the barnyard and carries off a succulent chicken. The Great Horned breeds very early in the year, fresh eggs having been found as early as February, when the ground was covered with snow. The nest is placed in a tree and is generally an elaboration of a hawk's or squirrel's nest. Two or three large, white eggs are laid.

SCREECH OWL.—*Megascops asio*. 9.45

Common Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Appears in two phases, one reddish brown, the other silvery-gray, both flecked and streaked with black; eyes yellow; ear-tufts an inch long, on sides of head.

This is the commonest of the Owls about here. Sometimes just at dusk one will invade the Capital City, possibly to absorb a little more "wisdom" from the legislative atmosphere.

Nest is in a hollow tree; eggs, four to six, white.

SAW-WHET OWL; ACADIAN OWL.—*Nyctala acadica*. 8.00

Rare Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Smallest species here; no ear tufts; upper parts dark grayish-brown; under parts white, streaked with brown.

I know a gentleman who has one of these birds mounted, in his library. It was taken near Albany. There are few records, but its winter range covers this County and I am told that it is present in small numbers.

BARRED OWL.—*Syrnium varium*. 20.00

Common Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Head well rounded, without ear-tufts; disk gray; eyes black; general color grayish-brown; upper parts barred, and breast streaked with black.

This is the bird whose weird cries in the night, heard occasionally in obscure rural places, have given it the name of Hoot Owl. Several have been taken recently very near Albany.

SHORT-EARED OWL.—*Asio accipitrinus*. 15.51

Rare Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Under parts very light buffy, finely streaked with black; upper parts warm brown, streaked with blackish; ear tufts very short; inclined to be diurnal.

A few specimens of this Owl have been taken here. It nests on the ground; eggs, four to seven, white.

AMERICAN LONG-EARED OWL.—*Asio wilsonianus*. 14.80

Rare Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Much darker plumage than the above species, barred all over with black; tail rather long; ear-tufts, over an inch in length, rise from center of crown and curve outward.

This is a strictly nocturnal species. If one can get a glimpse of the ears, or horns, identification should be positive.

Nests in hollow trees; eggs, four to six, white.

Family Strigidæ

AMERICAN BARN OWL.—*Strix pratincola*. 18.00

Extremely Rare Permanent Resident

Field marks.—White face, surrounded by a heart-shaped, brown line, formed by feathers, which stand out something like an Elizabethan ruff; eyes black; upper part bright tawny, overcast by gray flecked with black and white polka-dots; upper parts of wings and tail faintly barred with blackish; under parts of wings marked with broken bars of black; breast and belly white, flecked with fine black dots; flanks washed with tawny; tarsi very long.

The above description is from a finely mounted specimen taken here in October, 1907. I have never seen the living bird. All writers seem to approach the subject of this Owl very gingerly, as though they were hardly sure of their ground, and I confess to the same feeling. It is so uncommon and has such retiring habits that one might live several lifetimes and not encounter it. It is said to frequent the dark corners of old buildings or deep woods, occasionally uttering a series of weird, screaming notes. Its quaint face has given it the name of Monkey-faced Owl.

It is said to make its nest in a tower or steeple, or occasionally in a hollow tree.

SUBORDER FALCONES

Family Falconidæ¹

AMERICAN OSPREY; FISH HAWK.—*Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*. 23.10

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Entire under parts pure white; upper parts dark brown.

It is a matter of satisfaction to record that this magnificent and entirely harmless bird is fairly common in this County. I have observed examples on the Hudson River in close proximity to Albany, and over the Normanskill near Kenwood on nearly all of my outings in those directions. I have not yet located a nest in this County, though in the height of the breeding season of 1904 I found three adults in a wild spot known locally as "Hell Hole," in Rensselaer County, about four miles south of the city of Rensselaer and but a short distance from the Hudson River, whose actions indicated that I was close to an eyrie. One of these Ospreys had in its talons a large fish, which it had just caught in the river. My efforts to locate the nest were unsuccessful, but I have no doubt that it was near at hand. Two of the birds flew low, uttering the while their peculiar flute-like cries, which often resembled the warbling of lesser birds. The amateur has no difficulty in identifying the Osprey, the pure white under parts

¹In coloration, the plumages of the females differ from the males much less among the Falcones than in almost any other group of birds; but the females average from one to three

inches longer than the males, according to the species, though considerable variation is sometimes found. The measurements here given apply to the males.

and the pronounced curve of the great wings being the distinguishing characteristics. The Fish Hawk is a wonderful flier; in fact, except when arising from the water after a dive for its prey, it seems to exert no wing effort whatever in its slow and graceful aerial movements. With apparently set pinions it will float, high in the calm summer air, for a long period. Then, having discovered a tempting fish far below, it will drop like a stone, striking the water with a loud splash. If the fish is captured the great bird will bear it away to some nearby height and devour it. Ospreys are thoroughly protected by law throughout the year, and well they may be, for they work no injury to anyone and are certainly picturesque figures along watercourses. It is only an ignorant person who will shoot an Osprey or destroy its nest. Numerous stories are told of the proneness of the Fish Hawk to return year after year to the same loved eyrie and rear its young. The nest is a bulky affair placed in a tall tree or on a rocky ledge, and the eggs are beautifully mottled with varying shades of dark brown and purple on a buff or whitish ground.

Subfamily Accipitrinæ

AMERICAN SPARROW HAWK.—*Falco sparverius*. 9.50

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Head and wing-coverts bluish-slaty; reddish spot on crown; one band on tail; spotted, light under parts; smallest hawk seen here.

This beautiful little Falcon I have not found numerous in Albany County, but westward in the Mohawk Valley,



RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

PLATE XVII

between Amsterdam and Johnstown I have seen a great many of them in the height of the breeding season. It frequents open fields, over which it flies with rapid wing strokes in a constant search for mice and small birds, grasshoppers and other large insects.

The nest is in a hollow tree. From four to seven eggs are laid; white, or buffy ground, spotted with brown.

PIGEON HAWK.—*Falco columbarius*. 10.15

Common Spring and Fall Migrant

Field marks.—Three or four light bars on tail; upper parts slaty-blue; under parts white or buffy, streaked with black; light brown collar about neck.

This is next in size to the Sparrow Hawk, from which it can be told by its more rapid wing motion and its pigeon-like appearance when in repose.

DUCK HAWK.—*Falco peregrinus anatum*. 16.00

Very Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Very swift flier; powerful wings; gun the only sure means of identification.

I have never seen this Hawk in life, but others tell me that several have been observed in this County in the Autumn.

BALD EAGLE; AMERICAN EAGLE.—*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*. 32.00

Not Uncommon Transient Visitant

Field marks.—Head, neck and tail white; rest of plumage dark brown, appearing blackish to distant observer.

The above description applies only to the adult birds in the third or fourth year, as the immature examples are uniformly dark, flecked here and there with white. Bald Eagles have been seen quite frequently in recent years passing over Albany County and they doubtless pause occasionally when circumstances are propitious, though they certainly do not breed here. Farther down the Hudson Valley there are known eyries, which remain unmolested year after year. The species is not so rare as has been supposed, though the regions hereabouts are not favorable to it as a resident. There is no mistaking the mature bird with a white head, but the immature birds can be told from certain Hawks only by their immense spread of wings.

AMERICAN ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK.—*Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis*. 21.50

Very Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Nocturnal in habits, hunting in late twilight; slow, noiseless, measured flight; plumage dark, though it exists in lighter phase.

This Hawk has been occasionally seen in this County.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK.—*Buteo platypterus*. 14.00

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Tail dark, with two light bands; under parts brownish, barred with darker shade; upper parts dark brown with infusion of gray.

This beautiful Hawk is rarely seen near Albany, but it is present in the wooded slopes of the Helderbergs, where it doubtless breeds. It has a very un-hawk-like cry which resembles the notes of the Wood Pewee.

Nest high in a tree; eggs, two to four, white ground, splashed with brown.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK.—*Buteo lineatus*. 18.35

Common Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Lesser wing-coverts bright reddish-brown, in distinct contrast with the darker shades of brown and blackish of the upper parts; four or five bands across tail, which show in flight; under parts buffy, streaked and lightly barred with blackish.¹

This and the following species are known to the farmers as Hen Hawks, for they sometimes descend upon an unsuspect-

¹The drawing of the Red-shouldered Hawk which Mr. Richard has made (Plate XVII) is really a portrait of a living albino which he kept for some time in his laboratory. The bird was taken near Albany and brought to Mr. Richard with a single gun-shot wound through one wing. It was pure white throughout, with not a sign of a marking. The eyes were remarkably beautiful, the irises being a deep, rich, translucent blue, and the pupils black. The bird soon recovered from its injury and made itself at home, losing in a very short time its fierceness, and roaming at will about the room. Eventually the bird became tame and would stand on its master's wrist and eat from his hand. The bird was fond

of throwing itself into all sorts of grotesque attitudes, spreading its tail, expanding its wings downward and fluffing up its feathers until it resembled a great white ball. Late in the Winter the Hawk became sick and it was sent to the happy hunting ground by means of chloroform. It was mounted and can now be seen in the State Museum. In making his drawing Mr. Richard has supplied the normal markings from another specimen, but the eyes have been left as in the albino. "It seems a pity to destroy the facial likeness," observed the artist; and I let it go at that. Surely cold science should not claim everything.

ing fowl and carry it off with ease. I once saw a Red-shoulder swoop down on a proud Plymouth Rock rooster of a very large size and slay it with one blow of its powerful, hooked beak. This happened about two rods from where I was standing, and I believe the rooster would have been carried off had I not rushed to the scene of the tragedy and frightened the Hawk away. The only mark I could find on the fowl was a single indentation in the skull. While young and inexperienced I tried one day to capture an adult Red-shoulder alive. I had shot the bird and it had fallen to the ground. When I came up to His Hawkship he was standing erect, with one wing broken, but defiance still gleaming in his wicked eyes. Creeping up to him, I made a sudden grab for his neck. With a lightning-like movement the Hawk raised his nigh foot and seized my wrist, burying his long talons a quarter of an inch in my flesh. It was not until I had crushed the bird to death with my knee that I could extricate my wrist from his grasp. I recall distinctly the expression of lofty pride in those dying eyes, and my sympathies, now, are with the bird, though shortly after the tragedy, glass eyes, wire, and tow, did very well for him.

The nest of the Red-shoulder is a big affair, placed in a tree at a considerable distance from the ground. The eggs number from three to six and vary in coloration. In a nest once found by my brother there was one plain white egg, one slightly speckled with light brown at the smaller end, a third richly splashed all over with russet and lilac, and a fourth with a light greenish ground, marked all over with dark greenish and light brown.



BARRED OWL

PLATE XVIII

RED-TAILED HAWK.—*Buteo borealis*. 20.00

Uncommon Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Tail bright reddish, with one narrow band near the tip; under parts white, streaked with brown; upper parts dark brown.

The habits of this Hawk are almost identical with those of the Red-shoulder, but it comes out in the open less and is fond of the wilder, wooded sections of the County. Its nest and eggs are similar to those of the preceding species.

AMERICAN GOSHAWK.—*Accipiter atricapillus*. 22.00

Irregular Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Upper parts slaty gray and under parts lighter; entire bird appears barred and streaked with darker gray.

Some Winters a number have been seen here; again, some years, it appears to be absent.

COOPER'S HAWK.—*Accipiter cooperii*. 15.54

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Tail rounded, with V shaped bars; upper parts dark gray; under parts light, barred with brown.

This is considered about the most destructive to poultry of all the Hawks. It nests in trees, laying from four to six bluish-white eggs.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK.—*Accipiter velox*. 11.30

Common in Early Spring and Fall

Field marks.—Tail square, barred; primaries barred; upper parts grayish brown; under parts whitish, barred and streaked with pale brown.

This Hawk is the bitterest enemy of the small birds, devouring more than any other of its race. It may possibly breed here, though I have no record. The nest is placed high in trees; eggs, four to six, nearly spherical, and wreathed, generally around the center, with blotches of reddish-brown.

MARSH HAWK.—*Circus hudsonius*. 19.00

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Long tail, barred; upper tail-coverts white; general color gray, darker on upper parts; breast and under parts white, lightly barred with pale brown.

This bird is apt to fly low and leisurely, and is therefore easy to identify. The nest is placed on the ground in marshes; eggs, four to six, dull white.

ORDER COLUMBÆ

Family Columbidae

MOURNING DOVE.—*Zenaidura macroura*. 11.90

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Only common wild dove in this County; makes whistling sound with wings as it flies; long pointed tail; dove-like in appearance.

There can be no mistaking this bird for one of any other family. While no great numbers are met with about here, still a few are seen every year during the breeding season. The nest is a slight platform of sticks, placed rather low in a tree, often in an orchard; eggs, two, white.

PASSENGER PIGEON.—*Ectopistes migratorius*. 16.29

Rarest of all Birds; Nearly Extinct in East.

Field marks.—Upper parts slaty-blue; back and sides of neck iridescent; center of back and scapulars brownish-olive, becoming dusky on wings, which are tipped with white; under parts bright reddish-buff; lower belly white.

This beautiful Pigeon, formerly the most abundant of all our birds, is now among the scarcest. Time was when they

travelled in flocks numbering many millions of individuals; now, the finding of a single specimen is an unusual event. During the Summer of 1906, and again in 1907, a Wild Pigeon was observed by Mr. Edmund N. Huyck and others, at his country place in Rensselaerville. This is the only report in many years of the appearance of *Ectopistes* in this County. About twelve years ago Mr. Charles Payne, of East Scho-dack, Rensselaer County, saw a small flock and shot six, not realizing at the time how extremely rare the Pigeon was. These were the only individuals he had seen in many years, and he has observed none since that time. During the present year Mr. John Burroughs created a great deal of interest in the ornithological world by announcing that he had positively verified the report of the presence of a flock of about one thousand Wild Pigeons near the Beaverkill, Sullivan County, this State. The birds were observed late in the afternoon of May 23, 1907, by a number of reliable persons, among whom was an old farmer who had seen the birds in great numbers in that vicinity forty years ago. He said that he knew Wild Pigeons as well as he knew folks. Mr. Burroughs was perfectly confident that the record was authentic. (*The Outlook*, July 13, 1907.)

The nest of Passenger is a rude platform of sticks, set in a tree; two white eggs are laid.

ORDER GALLINÆ

Family Tetraonidæ

Subfamily Tetraoninæ

RUFFED GROUSE; PARTRIDGE; PHEASANT.—*Bonasa umbellus*. 17.00

Uncommon Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Flies up with a bang, making more noise than any other bird in Albany County; tufts of broad, glossy black feathers on each side of neck; entire plumage barred and mottled with varying shades of brown.

I know a place within a short car ride from Albany where I invariably flush four or five fine Partridges; then there is another wooded slope where I have frequently scared up from one to three; but I am not going to indicate these places as I am fond of live Partridges in the field and would like to see them live. The gunner hereabouts laments the fact that the Grouse have almost disappeared from the County and, with a wise look, packs his expensive shooting outfit and takes the train for the North Woods. Let us not hinder him; the farther he goes the better I like him; and in the meantime it is possible that a few birds will continue to exist near the Capitol.

It cannot be denied that the Ruffed Grouse has become a rare bird here. The land has been too much denuded of

its forests to favor the increase of the Grouse, but they doubtless breed here sparingly. It is unnecessary to describe this, our most magnificent game bird, as almost everyone has seen them, before the present game laws were enacted, hanging before our markets, victims to the epicurean tastes of superior man.

During the main part of the year the Partridge is very wild and distant. Formerly they were supposed to be untamable, but a writer in a recent magazine, tells of having thoroughly domesticated a number of birds and bred them in captivity.

But however wary the Grouse may be generally, there is a certain period of the year when the hen puts by all fear of natural enemies and can be as easily approached as a barnyard fowl. This is when the chicks have just left the shell and need their mother's protection. I recall very well in early years, coming suddenly upon a hen Partridge with a very large brood of fluffy, downy chicks. It was in an old, little-frequented mountain road in Connecticut. I stooped and lifted a couple of the chicks in my hands. They rested contentedly enough in my palms, but what an agony of mind the mother betrayed! With every feather erect, wings drooping, and tail spread, she fairly danced about me, coming so close that I could have reached out and touched her. And all the time she uttered strange, wild cries, much like the whining of a cat. Then I placed the chicks on the ground and retired a short distance from the spot. The mother straightway calmed down and led her brood into the underbrush; for a moment I heard a scurrying of tiny feet through the leaves and then the whole company had vanished.

I waited five minutes and heard a call, different this time, over under the mountain side. The mother had reached a place of safety and was marshalling her forces.

Subfamily *Perdiciinæ*

BOB-WHITE; QUAIL.—*Colinus virginianus*. 10.00

Extremely Rare Permanent Resident

Field marks.—Whistles its name on two notes, the last the higher, sometimes repeating the last note; throat and broad line over eye, pure white; rest of plumage mottled, barred, and checked with varying shades of brown and buff; bill very short; form well rounded.

The latter part of June and in midsummer the mellow whistle of Bob-white is occasionally heard in old pastures and along the edges of meadows in this County; but the species is not so numerous as in days of yore and, in the Autumn, covies are very rarely encountered by the hunter. While very wild and difficult to approach after they have gathered into flocks in the Fall, Quail, like the Ruffed Grouse, change their habits completely during the breeding season. Not long ago I found a nest on August 22 containing seventeen eggs. The flushed bird disappeared in some nearby second growth, and after a hasty glance at the glistening white pyriformed eggs I hastened away, not wishing to disturb the home. But actuated by a desire to make further observations I visited the spot two days later. The nest was under a little cluster of blackberry vines and grass about

thirty feet from railroad tracks. I approached very cautiously and to my amazement the sitting female allowed me to come within four feet of the nest. I knelt down until my face was within two feet of the mother bird, and she still remained unmoved.

With a gentle movement of my hand I shooed her from the nest. She arose slowly, with no show of alarm, walked to a small rock about six feet away, mounted it and turned and looked me over. There was something very dainty and elegant in her manner which excited my admiration to the utmost. But wishing to test her equanimity further I exclaimed aloud: "Well, you are a cool one; don't you know that I may be a murderer?" For answer she calmly preened her wings, fluffed up her feathers, cocked her head to one side, and looked at me as much as to say: "O, I don't know; I guess you are harmless." I waved my hand again and gave a "shoo." She walked down off the rock, strolled leisurely across a short open space, passed under a barbed wire fence, and mounted another rock on the other side. After a further survey of the nest, I arose and walked away about two rods and had the satisfaction of seeing her return to the nest in the same deliberate manner in which she had left it. I never visited my Bob-white again, but I trust she reared her brood in safety and that the whole family dodged the wily gunner in the Fall.



GREEN HERONS AND NEST
(From a group in the State Museum, Albany)

PLATE XIX

ORDER LIMICOLÆ

Family Charadriidæ¹

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER; RING-NECK.—*Ægialitis*
semipalmata. 6.76

Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Throat and ring around neck white; black band across breast and extending around lower neck; sides of head black; upper parts grayish-brown; under parts white; bobs.

The sweet call of this bird is occasionally heard in some of the marshy districts of this County, in Spring or Fall, but it is never plentiful. It requires a close observer to establish its identity.

KILLDEER.—*Oxyechus vociferus*. 10.50

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Constantly utters high-pitched *kill-dee*; two bands of black across breast, divided by white, upper band forming ring about neck; rump reddish-brown; bobs.

While this Plover has a wide range, it has long been regarded as extremely rare in this section. In open meadows,

¹A number of these water-birds are very wary and so seldom seen as to render it practically impossible to give any field-marks which will aid in identification. The same rule applies to the Ducks. Even hunters of many years experience sometimes

fail to identify a Duck until they have bagged the bird. Because of these facts the author, in several instances, has merely catalogued several of the rarer forms of Sandpipers and Ducks. These should be studied in a museum.

especially near water, a few individuals are occasionally seen, and it is known to breed. The two black bands across the breast and the common call, render it easy to identify. Three or four eggs, light buffy ground, speckled and etched with dark umber, are laid in a mere depression on the ground, in a dry, stony field.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER.—*Charadrius dominicus*
10.50

Not Uncommon in the Autumn

Field marks.—Upper parts black, faintly spotted with dull yellow; under parts very slightly lighter; on close view the entire upper parts have a lustrous golden tinge.

Expert gunners tell me that every Fall they take several bags of this handsome Plover. A number have already been taken this Fall (1907) in Rensselaer County. The novice will find it difficult to identify this bird in the field and the best way to study it is to examine the skin in a museum.

Family Scolopacidæ

SPOTTED SANDPIPER.—*Actitis macularia*. 7.50

Very Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Teeters constantly; upper parts light grayish-brown; under parts white, spotted with dark brown; bill nearly an inch in length.

From late in April until toward the last of August, this bird is found very numerous along inland streams and old

ponds with stony or sandy borders, everywhere throughout this section. It is easily identified, for other members of its family are very rare hereabouts. Flying low over the water, with peculiar intermittent wing motion and uttering the while its sweet-toned *peet, peet, peet*, it is often about the only sign of bird life in its watery haunts, unless the rattling notes of the Kingfisher happen to be heard overhead. When the bird alights it teeters rapidly several times, picks a scrambling bug from the sand and runs onward, constantly bobbing and feeding. The nest is usually placed a considerable distance from the water. I have found several in potato fields. It is a mere depression in the ground with a few straws or particles of grass at the bottom. The eggs, numbering four, are decidedly pyriform, with creamy ground and heavily spotted and blotched with varying shades of dark brown, heavier at the larger end.

BARTRAMIAN SANDPIPER; UPLAND PLOVER.—*Bartramia longicauda*. 11.50

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Tail long; outer wing feathers barred with white; upper parts mixture of black and light brown; under parts buffy to white; breast and sides streaked with black; bill over an inch long.

No nest here is recorded.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER.—*Helodromas solitarius*. 8.40

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Swallow-like flight; an inch longer than the Spotted Sandpiper, but habits similar; not quite so active.

The habits of this species are similar to those of the Spotted Sandpiper. If one can get a good view of Solitarius in flight the barred axillars are the best means of identification. It undoubtedly breeds in Albany County, as it has been taken here in June and July, but no nest has been found.

YELLOW-LEGS; SUMMER YELLOW-LEGS.—*Totanus flavipes*. 10.76

Not Uncommon in Fall

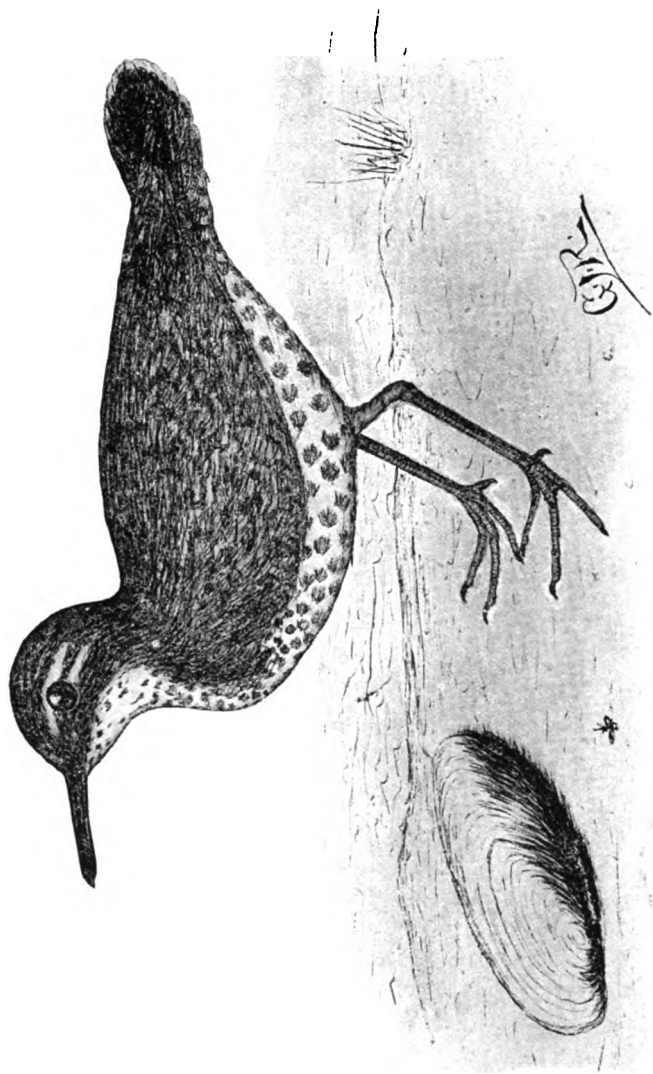
Field marks.—Resembles following species, but is about four inches smaller; bill nearly an inch and a half long.

GREATER YELLOW-LEGS; WINTER YELLOW-LEGS.—*Totanus melanoleucus*. 14.00

Not Uncommon in the Fall

Field marks.—Upper parts dusky, barred with gray; under parts white; throat streaked, breast and sides barred with black; tail black, white at base. Bill over two inches in length.

The gunners here take several of the above species every Autumn.



SPOTTED SANDPIPER

PLATE XX

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER

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SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER.—*Ereunetes pusillus*. 6.30

Fall Migrant

Field marks.—Over an inch smaller than Spotted Sandpiper, but plumage similar; has swallow-like flight.

LEAST SANDPIPER.—*Actodromas minutilla*. 6.00

Fall Migrant

Field marks.—Smallest Sandpiper seen here; similar in plumage and habits to *Actitis macularia*.

DOWITCHER.—*Macrorhamphus griseus*. 10.50

Recorded as Rare Straggler

WILSON'S SNIPE.—*Gallinago delicata*. 11.25

Not Uncommon in Fall

Field marks.—Head striped with black and buff; form similar to Woodcock; general plumage black and buff.

A few of these birds fall victims to the hunter every Fall and it is believed that they breed here sparingly. Wilson's Snipe is a smaller, more dainty bird than the Woodcock.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK.—*Philohela minor*. 11.00

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Bill nearly three inches in length; tail short; wings of good length; eyes set high up in head; plumage checked, barred, and mottled with various shades of brown, upper parts darker; three black bars across top of head; markings less pronounced and under parts bright buff, in Autumn.

There is no bird more difficult to observe than the Woodcock, though occasionally one will be encountered just at sundown out in the open and then apparently least mindful of other creatures. Once, only, I observed one executing its eccentric flight-song. It arose in a spiral flight to a considerable height, uttering the while a series of whistling notes, without melody, and then fell back to the earth. Probably the female was near at hand and the performance was being given for her delectation, but I came upon the bird so suddenly that the act was not repeated. During the love season the male becomes a true Cock of the Wood and struts and parades his fine figure and plumage before the admiring female, generally choosing a fallen log for his stage. Our artist, Mr. Richard, mounted a young male in this strutting attitude, following closely the descriptions furnished by two close observers, and from this made the drawing reproduced in Plate XVI.

A fledgling was once brought to me and I devoted several days to its care, but it moped in a corner, refused all food, and finally died. Once I came upon two parent birds and four full-fledged young, standing motionless in a small circle,

on the ground, in a group of white birches. They put to flight on my appearance, and, on examining the place where they had been, I found a large Milk Snake. This reptile is a noted devourer of birds and, while I discredit the tales of "snake charming" that I have heard, I could not help wondering if His Snakeship had managed somehow to hypnotize the Woodcocks. At any rate the spell was broken when I appeared. In two minutes the snake was dead. I have never found the nest of the Woodcock and I know of no one who has found it in Albany County. Nevertheless, it without doubt breeds here sparingly. Four darkly colored eggs are laid, early in the Spring, in a depression in the dead leaves on the ground.

ORDER PALUDICOLÆ

Family Rallidæ

Subfamily Fulicinæ

AMERICAN COOT; MUD-HEN.—*Fulica americana*. 15.00

Summer Resident

Field marks.—Chicken-like bill; upper parts blackish; under parts lighter.

Breeds in the cattail marshes of Watervliet and Green Island. Nest, a low reedy structure; eggs, eight to fifteen, buffy ground, speckled with brown and black.

Subfamily Rallinæ

SORA; CAROLINA RAIL.—*Porzana carolina*. 8.50

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Short, yellow bill; upper parts brown, streaked with black; under parts bluish-gray to white on belly; center of crown and line down middle of neck, black.

This little Rail is more often heard than seen. Its nest has been found in the cattail marshes along the river. It is

made of grass and placed on the ground. The eggs, from eight to fifteen, are buffy, spotted with pale brown.

VIRGINIA RAIL.—*Rallus virginianus*. 9.50

Fairly Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Bill an inch and a half in length, slightly curved; upper parts dark grayish-brown, streaked with blackish; warm brown on wings; under parts lighter brown, streaked and spotted with black and white.

The habits and range of this bird are similar to those of the preceding species.

ORDER HERODIONES

Family Ardeidæ

Subfamily Ardeinæ

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.—*Nycticorax nycticorax*
nævus. 24.00

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Black crown and back; forehead and under parts white or whitish; rump, tail, and wings gray; two slender plumes, eight inches in length, extend from the top of the head backward; legs and feet yellow.

This bird is a summer resident of Albany County, but is not found so numerously as the following species. It is about seven inches longer than the Green Heron, its upper parts are darker, and under parts much lighter; therefore it is not difficult to distinguish between the two. The Night Heron generally breeds in colonies, but in Albany County only isolated nests have been found. The nests are placed in trees and the eggs are pale bluish-green.

GREEN HERON.—*Butorides virescens*. 17.05

Common Summer Resident

Field marks.—Long beak, neck, and legs; short tail; upper parts dark iridescent green, with infusion of gray; bluish cast to wings; feathers of back long and pointed; sides of throat and neck dark chestnut; narrow black and white stripe down center of throat; under parts gray.

If you see a darkly colored bird, flying low, with heavy wing strokes, about the size of a Crow, but of such different

appearance that you feel sure it is not a Crow, you can rest assured that it is the Little Green Heron. Examined closely the bird is found to have all the Heron characteristics. When the bird is on the wing it looks much darker than it really is. In marshy places or along inland streams hereabouts, where the forest growth forms a tangle of interlacing branches, the Green Heron is quite common all through the Summer.

This is the bird that is called the Poke by the hunters, who seem to hold it in contempt and generally send after it a charge of shot. But hunters are not generally very exact ornithologists and they fail to understand that our Little Green Heron is entirely inoffensive, and has just as good a right to live as the more elegant song-birds.

The nest is a flat platform of sticks placed in a tree, from ten to thirty feet from the ground. Five or six pale green eggs are laid.

GREAT BLUE HERON.—*Ardea herodias*. 42.00-50.00

Uncommon Summer Resident; Common During Fall
Migration

Field marks.—Largest bird seen here; general tone of upper parts light slate-gray, with faint bluish cast in strong light; black markings on crown, edge of wings, breast, and belly; bill from four and a half to over six inches in length; very long neck; slender body; long thin legs; often stands motionless for some time in shallow water.

In October this great bird is a very common migrant throughout the Hudson Valley. In riding on the train

between Albany and New York I have seen from the car window dozens of them standing motionless in the shallow water on the edge of the river. Even where the track was very close to the water, the Great Blues did not seem to mind the tremendous noise, familiarity evidently having bred indifference in this case. The Great Blue Heron breeds in goodly numbers in the northern part of the State, but it can be recorded as a summer resident in Albany County, as only recently nests were found in Voorheesville. The nest is a great, rude platform of sticks placed high in a tree. The eggs are slightly larger than those of a barnyard hen and are pale blue.

Subfamily Botaurinae

LEAST BITTERN.—*Ardetta exilis*. 13.00

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Under parts buffy-white; crown, back, and tail glistening black; sides of neck light brown, back of neck chestnut; light brown patch on wing; dull black patch on either side of breast; heron-like in form.

This small water-bird breeds sparingly in the cattail marshes of Green Island and Watervliet. It is difficult to observe as it has a way of hiding itself among the reeds on the approach of an enemy. The nest is a platform of reeds, woven among the growing cattails. From three to six very light-blue eggs are laid.

AMERICAN BITTERN.—*Botaurus lentiginosus*. 28.00

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Upper parts dark brown and buffy; black streak on each side of neck; under parts light buff, streaked with brown; bill yellow; form heron-like.

The strange guttural notes of this stupid-appearing bird, which Mr. Hoffman thinks resemble the syllables "plum puddn' or unk'-a-chunk'," or "like the gurgling of a pump," are occasionally heard in Albany County in about the same localities as I have ascribed to the Least Bittern. It is slightly larger than the Night Heron, from which it can be distinguished in flight by its brownish upper parts. The flat nest of reeds is made on the ground in marshes. From three to five light buffy eggs are laid.

ORDER ANSERES

Family Anatidæ

Subfamily Anserinæ

CANADA GOOSE.—*Branta canadensis*. 35.00-43.00

The honking of the fork-shaped flocks of Wild Geese, as they pass over in the early Spring and late Fall, is familiar to everyone in this County, even residents of cities. Occasionally they pause for a short time along the river or on some inland pond.

Subfamily Fuligulinæ

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER.—*Oidemia deglandi*. 22.00

One instance on record.

OLD-SQUAW.—*Harelda hyemalis*. 21.00

Rare straggler in Winter. Can be told by the long, middle tail-feathers.

BUFFLE-HEAD.—*Charitonetta albeola*. 14.76

One pair was shot near the Helderbergs so late in the Spring as to lend color to the possibility of its breeding here. It is commonly regarded, however, as a very rare migrant. It has an apparently black head with a white patch like a small night-cap over the top, coming down under the eyes.

AMERICAN GOLDEN-EYE; WHISTLER.—*Clangula clangula americana*. 20.00

Rare Winter Visitant

Field marks.—Head black; (on near view, green or deep violet, according to intensity of light); large white patch in front of eye; back ebony black; rest of plumage snow white.

The loud, whistling sound made by the wings of this swift-flying Duck has given it the common name of Whistler. Several examples have been observed here in Winter on the river.

BARROW'S GOLDEN-EYE.—*Clangula islandica*. 20.00

Rare Winter Visitant

Field marks.—White patch at base of bill, triangular; rest of plumage very similar to *clangula americana*.

Several examples of this Duck have been taken on the Hudson River, just north of Albany. It has also been observed and shot in Saratoga County.

LESSER SCAUP DUCK; LITTLE BLACKHEAD; LITTLE
BLUEBILL.—*Aythya affinis*. 16.50

Very rare straggler in Fall.

REDHEAD.—*Aythya americana*. 19.00

Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Head and neck bright reddish-brown; speculum gray; breast and upper parts black to gray; plumage considerably barred; belly white.

Subfamily Anatinae

WOOD DUCK.—*Aix sponsa*. 18.50

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Long occipital crest of purple and white feathers; speculum steel-blue; upper parts iridescent; long fan-shaped tail.

This has long been regarded as the most beautiful Duck in America. In earlier days it probably bred freely in this vicinity, but has now nearly disappeared. However, there are records of its having bred along the Normanskill within the past six years. Every Fall the expert gunner takes two or three.

The eggs, from four to sixteen, yellowish-white, are laid in the hollow of a tree.

PINTAIL.—*Dafila acuta*. 28.00

Not Uncommon Fall Migrant

Field marks.—Speculum from bronze to green; central feather of tail very long; upper parts brown and gray; under parts white.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL.—*Querquedula discors*. 16.00GREEN-WINGED TEAL.—*Nettion carolinensis*. 14.55

Both species are not uncommon Fall migrants through this County. To be identified they should be seen close enough to observe the brilliant blue and green specula.

BLACK DUCK.—*Anas obscura*. 22.00-25.00

Rare Summer Resident

Field marks.—Very swift flier; looks black or sooty to beholder with glass.¹

Mr. H. H. Valentine informs me that this magnificent Duck undoubtedly breeds here sparingly. I once saw a nest in central Connecticut. It was placed on the ground, among clusters of huckleberry bushes, on the top of a high mountain, about a mile from a small creek down in the valley. It was lined with dusky feathers, apparently plucked from the bird's body. The eggs numbered eleven and were dull greenish-white.

¹There is a red-legged variant of which may migrate through this species (*Anas obscura rubripes*) County.

MALLARD.—*Anas boschas.* 23.00

Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Speculum violet, bordered with black and white; head and neck lustrous green; white ring about neck; looks like a domestic drake.

Subfamily Merginæ

HOODED MERGANSER.—*Lophodytes cucullatus.* 17.50

Uncommon Migrant

AMERICAN MERGANSER; GOOSANDER; SHELDRAKE.—
Merganser americanus. 22.00

Winter visitant; several records.

ORDER LONGIPENNES

Family Laridæ

Subfamily Sterninæ

BLACK TERN.—*Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis.* 10.00

Straggler during migration; one record.

Subfamily Larinæ

HERRING GULL.—*Larus argentatus.* 24.00

Common in Early Spring

Field marks.—Entire under parts, head, and neck pure white; back and wings light gray.

Very early in the Spring, just after the ice has gone out of the river, I have observed several of these gulls over the Hudson about a mile north of Albany, and over the Mohawk River as far west as Amsterdam. In April one or two are generally to be seen on the river, from the lower to the upper parts of the Capital City. They remain about here, however, only a short time and then speed northward to breed.

Aside from one other straggler it is the only Gull to visit this County.

BONAPARTE'S GULL.—*Larus philadelphia*. 14.00

Straggling Early Spring Migrant

Field marks.—Head black; rest of plumage similar to Herring Gull.

One very fine specimen of this Gull was shot over the Hudson River just below Albany in May, 1896. It was probably a straggler, as I have no other record of its being seen hereabouts.

ORDER PYGOPODES

SUBORDER CEPPHI

Family Alcidae

Subfamily Alcinæ

BRUNNICH'S MURRE.—*Uria lomvia*. 16.50

Very rare Winter visitant. One was taken recently in Saratoga County.

Subfamily Phalarinæ

BLACK GUILLEMOT; SEA PIGEON.—*Cepphus grylle*.
13.00

One record, in Winter.

Family Gaviidæ

LOON.—*Gavia imber*. 32.00

RED-THROATED LOON.—*Gavia lumme*. 25.00

Not uncommon migrants, but have not been known to pause.

SUBORDER PODICIPEDES

Family Podicipidæ

PIED-BILLED GREBE.—*Podilymbus podiceps*. 13.51

Uncommon Summer Resident

Field marks.—Moves about surface of water like a Duck; bill light, crossed by band of black; plumage various shades of brown, darker in Autumn.

This small bird of our inland waters is more generally known by the name of Hell-diver for its skill in disappearing beneath the surface on the approach of an enemy. Their hearing is extremely acute and the stories of their dodging gun-shot are not exaggerated. I have seen them shot at from a distance of about four rods and they easily dived beneath the water before the shot struck the surface. So soon as the reverberations of the discharge had died away the little Dab-chick (another common name) arose to the surface and floated serenely about, but always with an eye on the offensive gunner. Once upon a time I managed to crawl through some close brush, very near to where one was swimming unconcernedly on the quiet water. When the smoke of my gun had cleared up, I found the body of the pretty creature floating on the surface. This was my only offense. These Grebes breed sparingly in Albany County. The nest is built among the reeds. The eggs are from four to eight and are dull white.

HORNED GREBE.—*Colymbus auritus*. 13.50

Rare Migrant

Field marks.—Feathers of head black and light brown, and stand out like a monk's cowl, giving the bird a bizarre appearance; upper parts reddish-brown to blackish; white patch on wing.

If one can get close enough to this Grebe to observe its strange head, identification will be easy, for there is no other bird at all like it.

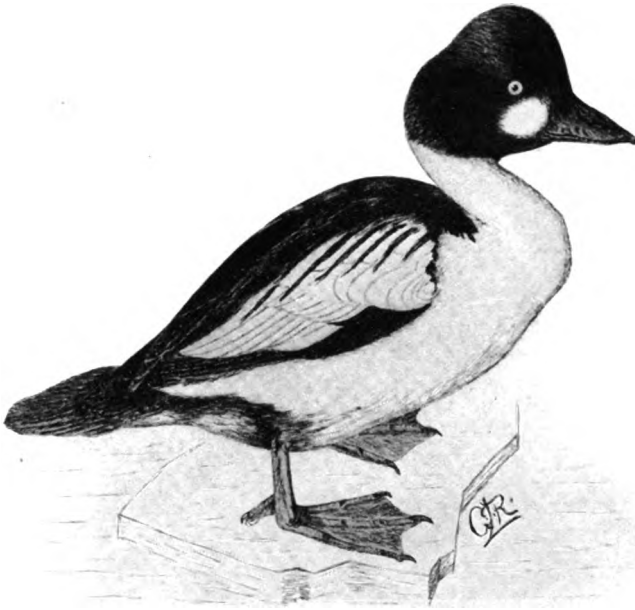
HOLBÆLL'S GREBE.—*Colymbus holbællii*. 19.00

A very much larger species, recorded here but once.

Birds of Washington Park

The appended list of the birds of Washington Park, Albany, is the result of the observations of three conservative bird students whose notes cover a period of about eight years. A large number of these birds, which are summer residents of this County, remain in the Park throughout the Summer, and build their nests in the trees or shrubbery; a number are seen occasionally in Winter, and the rest pause for a few days during the Spring or Fall migration. The list includes seventy-four species, but it is not intended to convey the idea that this number is complete, as any of the birds which pass this way are liable to pay a visit to our beautiful breathing spot. The list is as follows:

Bluebird	Brown Thrasher
American Robin	Catbird
Hermit Thrush	Mockingbird
Olive-backed Thrush	American Redstart
Wilson's Thrush	Canadian Warbler
Wood Thrush	Wilson's Warbler
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Yellow-breasted Chat
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Northern Yellow-throat
Chickadee	Oven-bird
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Pine Warbler
White-breasted Nuthatch	Black-throated Green Warbler
Brown Creeper	Blackburnian Warbler



AMERICAN GOLDEN-EYE

PLATE XXI

Black-poll Warbler	Vesper Sparrow
Bay-breasted Warbler	American Goldfinch
Chestnut-sided Warbler	American Crossbill
Magnolia Warbler	English Sparrow
Myrtle Warbler	Purple Finch
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Purple Grackle
Yellow Warbler	Rusty Blackbird
Northern Parula Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Nashville Warbler	Orchard Oriole
Black and White Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
White-eyed Vireo	Cowbird
Yellow-throated Vireo	American Crow
Warbling Vireo	Least Flycatcher
Red-eyed Vireo	Wood Pewee
Cedar Waxwing	Phoebe
Scarlet Tanager	Kingbird
Indigo-bird	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Chimney Swift
Towhee	Northern Flicker
Fox Sparrow	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Song Sparrow	Downy Woodpecker
Slate-colored Junco	Hairy Woodpecker
Chipping Sparrow	Belted Kingfisher
White-throated Sparrow	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
White-crowned Sparrow	Screech Owl

HYPOTHETICAL LIST

SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN.—*Cistothorus stellaris*.

AMERICAN PIPIT; TITLARK.—*Anthus pensilvanicus*.
(Undoubtedly present, though no records are available.)

CONNECTICUT WARBLER.—*Geothlypis agilis*.

PRAIRIE WARBLER.—*Dendroica discolor*.

HENSLOW'S SPARROW.—*Ammodramus henslowii*.

NORTHERN RAVEN.—*Corvus corax principalis*.

HORNED LARK.—*Otocoris alpestris*.

AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER.—*Picoides*
americanus

ARCTIC THREE-TOED WOODPECKER.—*Picoides arcticus*.

AMERICAN HAWK OWL.—*Surnia ulula caparoch*.

GOLDEN EAGLE.—*Aquila chrysaetos*.
(Last record in this vicinity, Schenectady County, 1851.)

PIPING PLOVER.—*Egialitis meloda*.

AMERICAN WIDGEON.—*Mareca americana*.

RED-LEGGED BLACK DUCK.—*Anas obscura rubripes*.

SYSTEMATIC TABLE

The system of nomenclature adopted in recent years by the American Ornithologists' Union is directly the reverse of that which has been used throughout this book. This reverse order has been pursued for the reason that the old system brings the more familiar and attractive birds at once before the reader and places the lower and less familiar forms at the end. From the systemist's point of view the A. O. U.'s Check-list is the better, as it is founded on the theory of evolution in which the lower orders come first, and are arranged in an ascending scale until the most highly specialized forms are reached. For the convenience of the student, the Orders, Suborders, Families, and Subfamilies of the birds of Albany County are appended, according to the A. O. U. nomenclature:

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